

**DERWENT PRIORY;**

**OR,**

**MEMOIRS OF AN ORPHAN.**

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**VOL. II.**

DERWENT PRIORY;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF AN ORPHAN.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

AND A HISTORY OF THE PRIORY, NOW A RUIN.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE PRIORY, AND THE PRIORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE CASTLE ON THE ROCK."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON.

PRINTED FOR H. R. LYNCH, PATERNOSTER-ROW.





# DERWENT PRIORY;

OR,

## MEMOIRS OF AN ORPHAN.

### IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

FIRST PUBLISHED PERIODICALLY; NOW REPUBLISHED,  
WITH ADDITIONS.

*Sw. Robert ———— Turgot*

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE CASTLE ON THE ROCK."

*March 25" ———— 1800*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II,

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR H. D. SYMONDS, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1798.



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## DERWENT PRIORY.

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### LETTER XIII.

*Miss Rutland to Lady Laura.*

The Priory, Sept. 11, 179—.

YOU have, by this time, my dear Lady Laura, received and read my last packet. You know my claims upon Lady Derwent, but you do not know half the kindness I have experienced from her:—indeed, till now, she has ever treated me as her own child; but now a nearer interest presses

on her heart. She thinks I impede the progress of her son, and wishes me married, lest I should prevent him from forming a splendid alliance. Lady Laura, she does not know the heart of Ellen.

But I have much to communicate, and must return to my narrative.

Immediately after I had sent off my last packet, I joined the family at dinner. Nothing particular passed. Before we withdrew, a servant entered, and told Merioneth that his horse was lame, and could not travel that evening. Lord and Lady Derwent appeared disappointed; but Merioneth seemed pleased with the accident.—

He, however, went to the stable, attended by the gentlemen. They soon returned; said it was only a slight sprain, and would be well by morning.

I com-



I complained of a head-ache, and retired to my own room.

In the morning, when we met at breakfast, Lord Merioneth looked ill, and declared he was not capable of traveling that day. The earl made no reply, but Lady Derwent desired he would have some advice. He evaded that, and went into the garden. Julia soon followed him. I dreaded being tormented by Sir John, so speedily slipped from the breakfast room to write this.

Julia is here. She has left Albert very ill; but he sets off this evening. He has been telling Julia of his wishes to prevail on me to accept his hand.

And, indeed (says the dear girl) when I see his distress, I almost wish you would. I have (for he has long



desired it) at last given him the manuscript I copied from the one my mother gave you. He put it in his pocket, saying, it should be his companion. It belongs to Ellen; therefore it must be dear to me.—

And where is he now? said I.—

In the library, with his father. You must positively speak to him, before he goes.—

Impossible! Lady Derwent will prevent it (said I): she is suspicious of your brother's attachment to me.—

Only tell him then, that you will never consent to marry Sir John; for I have been telling him all that my mother said in the morning upon that subject.—

Good heavens! (said I) how could you be so imprudent?—

How could I avoid (she replied)  
when

## MEMOIRS OF AN ORPHAN.

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when he before suspected it, and conjured me to relieve him from a state of torture?—

And what did he say?—

Oh! raved like a madman,—swore he would not leave the place without seeing you, and made me cry till I am not fit to be seen.—

Saying this, she hurried from me.—

And here let me pause; for I am too wretched to proceed. Oh! my dear Laura, do you not pity your hapless Ellen?

—  
Sept. 13, at night.

I MUST leave this place:—this haughty peer shall see that the woman he despises can, from a principle of  
B 3 gratitude,

gratitude, spare his peace, and fly the solicitations of his son.

We met at dinner: there were some strange gentlemen present. Albert appeared still ill, but strove to conceal it. He followed us to the drawing-room. We sat some time talking on indifferent subjects, when Lady Derwent rose, and desired I would attend her into the garden.— Julia left the room; but Albert seemed disposed to follow us; which Lady Derwent perceiving, told him his attendance was not necessary.— At the same moment I saw Sir John on the lawn. Albert likewise saw him.

Madam, (said he, struggling with passion) why am I tormented with all these seeming mysteries?—Do you, can you, really wish to sacrifice Miss Rutland

land to that wretch? pointing to the baronet.—

If you are acquainted with our plans, Sir, there is no mystery to explain.—

Your opinion is not asked, and your consent is not wanted. And give me leave to observe, that Miss Rutland has waved all pretensions to delicacy, in making you the confident of Sir John's proposals.—

Faint and trembling, I leaned on a chair, but could not utter a word.

It was not from Miss Rutland, madam (continued he) that I procured my information; and I must take this opportunity of informing your ladyship, that had it not been for that delicacy you deride, and those principles you are endeavouring to sacrifice, Miss Rutland would have been secure from those mortifying sollicitations, and en-



titled to the legal protection of one who would have thought every moment of his life lost, which was not devoted to her happiness.—

Albert (replied her ladyship) you are insolent; but, with it, you are candid. As for you, Miss Rutland, you have “no ambitious hopes, no ideal expectations.”—

Her sarcasms wounded my very soul. I endeavoured to speak, but my tears prevented me.

Then turning to her son, she exclaimed—Your cousin’s rejection of our proposals is now entirely explained. She, without doubt, discovered this hopeful attachment, and justly despised the meanness of the man she might otherwise have honoured with her choice.

2

She



MEMOIRS OF AN ORPHAN.

9

She paused;—I endeavoured to speak.

Ellen (said she, sternly) you cannot now impose on me; my credulity is passed, and I too plainly see the miserable farce I have so long been duped by. If you possess one atom of uncontaminated generosity, you will yet endeavour to repair the mischief you have done.—

Point but out the means (said I, sinking before her) and Ellen will, if possible, deserve your good opinion.—

Receive Sir John—and by so doing, annihilate the hopes of Albert.—

It must not, shall not be! (said he, raising me from the ground). Oh! my cruel mother, have you forgot the sufferings of this angel's parents? and can you unfeelingly pursue a conduct  
yourself

yourself which you condemned in another?—

Her ladyship was silent: I even thought she was affected.

At the same moment Lord Derwent entered, followed by Sir John. The features of the former were flushed with passion, while his eyes darted fury. He commanded his son instantly to leave the room, who bowed.

As to you, Miss Rutland (said he) there is but one thing which you can do to recompence us for the mischief you have occasioned. Receive Sir John (presenting him) as your future husband.—

Never, my Lord! you have no right to exact such obedience, said I.—

Nor you (he cried) any right to ensnare the affections of my son.—

Sir John, regardless of my answer,  
rudely

rudely pulled me towards him; which Albert perceiving, resolutely bid him desist from his insolence—or he would make him.

Nothing in nature could exceed the fury of the earl. He stamped, swore, protested nothing should prevent the engagements he had entered into from being fulfilled. He reproached me as the murderer of his hopes, and the destroyer of his peace; swore, that, unless I complied with the propositions, he would ever abandon me to the misery I merited.

Have I not (he exclaimed) reared, educated, and protected you? and is it thus that you reward me?—He laid his hand on my shoulder, and shook me violently. Unable to stand—I sunk on the ground. Albert advanced to my assistance. It was in vain that his

his father commanded him to be gone;—he vowed he would not leave me, till I was free from persecution, and the cause of the present dispute entirely abandoned. My Ellen (said he) this agitation distresses me beyond expression: be but composed, and I am resigned to every other ill.—

Again the storm burst. Lord Derwent was loud in his invectives, Albert severe in his retorts. My flurried senses forsook me, and, for several hours, I was in a state of insensibility. At length reason returned, and I saw Julia sitting beside me. Perceiving me sensible, she informed me, she was then with me, unknown to her parents, who had charged her not to visit me without their consent.

Heaven knows (said she, sighing deeply) what is become of my poor brother!—

Ah!



Ah! what of him, and whither is he gone? said I, hastily rising.—

Alas! I know not. I passed him about two hours ago on the stairs, as I was coming here: he had been listening at your door: he bade me come and look at you, and then join him in the parlour. I came here: you were asleep: I returned to the parlour, and found them in high debate. The earl commanded Albert to quit the Priory. He vowed he would not stir till he had seen you. My mother requested she might mediate between them.

I will not, said the earl, make concessions, where I have a right to exact obedience.—

I only request you, my lord, for the present to wave that right: hereafter

we

brother—



we may think of some plan to reconcile us all.—

Now you are again my mother! (cried Albert, dropping on his knee, and taking her offered hand; only promise me that Ellen shall not be persecuted with the addresses of that odious wretch, and I will hereafter be all you wish me.—

Right sir (retorted the earl): if you have every thing you want, you will generously be all we wish.—

At length, after much debate, it was agreed that Sir John's offers should be entirely rejected, on condition that my brother quitted the Priory in the morning, without seeing you, and returned no more without the earl's permission.

—To this he agreed, after exacting a solemn promise from Lady Derwent, that

that no interruption should be given you, on any account whatever, and that you should be entirely mistress of your own conduct.

Generous Albert! how did his goodness penetrate my heart!

Julia (said he, advancing to me) all pretended mystery and mean evasions are past for ever. I here publicly avow, that Ellen Rutland is the idol of my soul. To procure her peace, I will be a willing exile. And now, my sister, to your kindness I confide her: and remember that the affections of a brother who has ever loved you, depend on your attentions to your hapless friend.—

Dear, disinterested Albert!

He then hastily left the room. The earl ordered me to my apartment.—

Drowned

Drowned in tears, I besought leave to watch this night by your side ; which was sternly refused.—

By their example (replied the earl) I shall next have you disobedient, and insolently disputing my control. Instantly to your chamber, and there continue till I give fresh orders,—

For the first time in my life, I disobeyed him.

Adieu, my dear Ellen:—I must now, for fear of detection, unwillingly leave you,—

Overpowered by a thousand indescribable sensations, I sank again on my pillow ; and, at this pause in my fate, I will conclude this long letter.

Your's,

ELLEN RUTLAND.

P.S. Part

P.S. Part of this letter I wrote at the Priory. I will dispatch it by this post; and in my next, inform you of the means of my escape, and the place of my retreat.

My dear Friend,  
I have just received your letter of the 8th inst. and am glad to hear that you are well. I am sorry to hear that you are not so well as you were, but I hope you will soon be better. I am writing you this letter in a hurry, but I will try to be as clear as I can. I am sorry to hear that you are not so well as you were, but I hope you will soon be better. I am writing you this letter in a hurry, but I will try to be as clear as I can. I am sorry to hear that you are not so well as you were, but I hope you will soon be better. I am writing you this letter in a hurry, but I will try to be as clear as I can.

Vol. II.

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LETTER XIV

*Miss Rusland to Lady Laura.*

Ivy Farm, Sept. 16, 179—.

AFTER the departure of Julia, I sunk into a stupid kind of sleep, which continued till late the following day, when I awoke, and saw Kitty sitting beside me. From her I heard, that Merioneth had left the Priory, accompanied by his friend Severn. I continued all day in bed. In the evening Kitty again appeared, and offered to sit up by me. This I would not permit. I took a little gruel, and told her, I should sleep better if left to myself.—



I cannot go ma'am (said the girl) without telling you a secret, which I happened to hear this evening.—

Does it concern me, Kitty?—

Yes, it does, indeed; but I hope you will not tell who told you.—

This, you may be sure, I promised; and she then proceeded to inform me, that she overheard Lord Derwent and Sir John planning to take advantage of Merioneth's absence, and to oblige me to be instantly married to Sir John. — Lord Derwent said, he could easily, as my guardian, procure a special licence.

I started with horror, begged her to keep this information to herself, and requested to be left alone. She wished me a good night, and left me to reflect on my uncertain state.

I could not sleep. I rose; threw a

wrapper round me, and walked the chamber. The moon shone with unsullied lustre; and, as I contemplated the solemn scene, an idea occurred of making my immediate escape. But how, or what place? was an important consideration.

While I was revolving this in my mind, my eyes were struck with astonishment at beholding Merioneth pacing, with hurried steps, the lawns below.

Ah! my friend, this was, methought, the very crisis of my fate.—My heart throbbed to tell him all its sorrows; but reason, stern monitress! repulsed the hasty wish.—She whispered, that the moment was pregnant with danger; for, that I should have to combat not only the pleadings of his heart, but the treachery of my own. I obeyed

obeyed her admonition, and retired from the window.

At that moment I recollected, that I had not fastened the door after Kitty left me; and, fancying that I heard a distant step in the gallery, I laid my hand on the bolt:—it resisted my touch. With a degree of strength, given by terror, I pushed violently against the door: fortunately, it fastened at the same moment. I heard, at the same time, voices in the gallery.

Racked with apprehension at these mysterious circumstances, I again looked from the window. Albert was still on the lawn. It could not be he in the gallery. Who then could it be?—In anxious suspense, I passed the succeeding hours. I lay down, but I could not sleep. At the approach of day, I again rose, and saw Albert dis-

appear. I sickened at his departure, and would have given worlds to speak once more to him before we parted,—perhaps, for ever.

I was pursuing this train of reflection, and viewing, with heavy heart, the now deserted lawn, to my great surprise, I soon after saw Sir John and his valet, Oskam, in deep consultation. Conviction at once flushed on my mind, and certainty took place of doubt.—He it must be, who had tried the door of my room. What an insult! But, from him, what else could be expected?

My thoughts followed Albert:—where could he be concealed? and what were his motives for not leaving the neighbourhood? These were enigmas I could not resolve; but at all events I determined to keep my room  
for



for the present, and, if possible, to escape from the tyranny they were preparing to exercise over me.

In this frame of mind, I endeavoured to recruit nature by soliciting sleep. Kind Morpheus shed his poppies over me, and I slept for some hours. Kitty tapped at the door with tea; I drank it: she then presented a note, which was given her privately by Julia. It was written by Merioneth. In it he informed me, that they were at \*\*\*\*, about five miles from the Priory; that he would not leave the place without seeing me, for he was sure they would make me marry Sir John; that if I declined seeing him, as that evening, he would, in defiance of the consequences such a proceeding might occasion, return the next morning to the



Priory; and concluded, by entreating me to prepare for an immediate journey to Scotland.

This note was given to Julia by one of the gardeners, as she walked before breakfast, who told her, he would wait in the same place, in the evening, to receive an answer.

The necessity for my departure grew every hour more apparent; how else could I avoid the two extremes of my fate? and from either of them what a small share of comfort should I, in all probability, receive! — The character of Bateman is repugnant to every principle of propriety. A professed sportsman, a known debauchee, allying pride with meanness, and wealth with avarice; and to complete the whole, blending the follies of youth with the vices of maturity. On the other hand,  
Merioneth

Merioneth himself is irresistible; but could I rashly expose him to the blind chance of the earl's forgiveness, who is so inexorable when once offended, and so prejudiced by the distinctions of birth and fortune, that, I am certain, were we united, he would never restore Merioneth to his favour, on any other conditions than separating him from his wretched wife?

I determined to depart, if possible, this afternoon, and proceeded to make the necessary arrangements. I deposited my valuables in the cabinet of my dressing-room. I then, with a beating heart, penned a few lines to Lady Derwent. I inclosed my keys in the letter, and entreated her ladyship to take charge, for the present, of every thing belonging to me.

Just as I had finished my letter, lady  
Derwent

Derwent appeared, followed by Julia. They enquired after my health, said they were going to dine at Maple-mount, and thought the ride would be of service to me, if I would consent to go. I declined the proposal, alleging that my spirits were too weak for company. My excuses were accepted, and they soon after left me.

It is impossible to relate the various plans I conceived and adopted till the hour of dining. Kitty brought my dinner. I ate but little. She informed me, the family was just gone. She left me, and I again endeavoured to adopt some certain plan of action, intending to leave the house while the the servants were at dinner, that my departure might not be noticed. Fortunately, I recollected, that the caravan which goes from a neighbouring town to meet the mail, would pass the park.

park - gate, between four and five o'clock. It was now three. I hastily collected a few changes of linen, which I disposed of by putting in my pockets, slipped on my habit, and departed without observation.

I gained the road without meeting a single creature. The caravan soon overtook me, and I instantly got into it. There was but one passenger besides myself, and he was an elderly man. Absorbed as I was in my own melancholy reflections, I was glad my companion made no attempts to converse with me.

We rode the first ten miles without speaking. Fresh horses were put to the carriage, and we proceeded to \*\*\*\*. I was so ill that it was with great difficulty I could keep my seat, this my companion observed, and humanely



manely asked, why I travelled in so weak a state?—You are not, surely, (said he) going to London!—

I am fearful (replied I) that I shall not be able to go farther than this stage; and I wish I could gain admittance into some decent family, for a few weeks, to recover my health.—

I think (said he) I can serve you. I have a sister within a few miles of this place: they are farmers, but, though homely, they are honest folks. If you approve of it, I will go to them and propose it.

I thanked him from the inmost recesses of my heart, and gratefully accepted his proposal.

On our arrival at the inn, he procured me a room, to which I gladly retired; ordered some whey, and went to-bed. Though sinking under fatigue,  
both



both of body and mind, a numerous train of ideas prevented the repose I so greatly needed. I arose unrefreshed, ordered my breakfast in my room, for fear there should be any person near that might notice my appearance.

Before I had finished my solitary meal, my kind friend returned, accompanied by his sister. All pecuniary matters were soon adjusted, and she referred me for her character to the mistress of the inn.

My enquiries proved quite satisfactory, and I simply told them, that I was unfortunately taken ill on the road, in my way to London; that owing to some domestic misfortunes, I should be obliged to conceal the place of my retreat; and entreated them all, should they hear any enquiries made after me, on no account to betray me.

Oh!

Oh! Lady Laura, what a situation was mine! thus to be thrown on the mercy of strangers.

They all assured me, that I might rely upon them; and, after taking leave of my good friend, and settling with my hostels, I departed with my new acquaintance for her house, which is situated about a mile from the public road. The good folks exert themselves to amuse me, and I think I am much better than I could have expected to be, after the fatigue both of mind and body, which I have recently experienced. Could I only hear, that all was well at the Priory, that Merioneth was restored to his friends, and Lady Derwent satisfied of my rectitude, I think I could be resigned to whatever state Providence should judge fit to allot me.

## A SONNET.

TO MORNING.

I Love thee, Morn, mild grey-ey'd maid,  
When Sol's refulgence gilds the east,  
And with luxuriant hand display'd,  
His beams dispel the murky mist;  
When night retires with all her shadowy train,  
To her deep cypress cave, beneath the *cherish'd*  
*main*;  
When the clear dew-drops on the hawthorns  
glow,  
And notes of praise through all the welkin  
ring;  
When the glad kine their unfeign'd pleasures  
low,  
And thy glad herald soars on quiv'ring wing;  
When rosy Health trips lightly o'er the plain,  
To greet, at early dawn, the ruddy village  
swain.  
When

DERWENT PRIORY, OR,

When curling woodbines scent the soften'd  
gales,

Which lead the golden carr Aurora guides;

When ev'ry flower its airy sweets exhales,

And purest pleasure o'er the senses provides;

When ev'ry charm, by thy mild influence  
given,

Receives fresh lustre from approving Heaven.

I make no apology for these long  
letters; I know my friend will excuse  
their prolixity. Should nothing par-  
ticular intervene; I intend remaining  
here till I hear from your ladyship. I  
will not injure your principles by a  
doubt of your secrecy; you can, you  
will, enter into every particular of my  
situation. Continue to favour me with  
your friendship; and should Merioneth  
call at Twickenham, should he be anx-  
ious to know the fate of Ellen, or in-  
clined to seek me,—tell him the search

is

is fruitless; tell him I love him too well to accept of his hand without the approbation of his family; tell him he is dearer to me than life; and that to promote his interest, I would sacrifice my own.

Adieu, my dear friend! Were we differently situated, I would ask for your protection; but, as it is, your ladyship's affinity to the family at the Priory places that happiness beyond the reach of

Your affectionate

ELLEN RUTLAND.



## LETTER XV

*Lady Laura to Miss Rutland.*

Twickenham, Sept. 20, 179—.

VARIOUS were the emotions, my dearest Ellen, that your long letter occasioned me. Admiration of your conduct, fear for your safety, and anxiety for your health, by turns, occupied my mind, as I pursued the interesting narration. — Welcome, a thousand times welcome, was it to my heart; for it relieved me from suspense almost intolerable.

To account for my uneasiness, I must inform you, that a few days before the

date

date of the last letter you wrote from the Priory, Mrs. Merioneth received one from Lady Derwent, and immediately informed me, that you would shortly expect my congratulation, in the character of Lady Bateman.

Knowing your aversion to the man, I hastily exclaimed—Surely they will not exact so severe a sacrifice!—

What can you mean? (retorted my aunt); is it not an offer infinitely above her expectations?—

By no means, my dear madam; Ellen is too well informed to expect happiness from the possession of wealth, or peace of mind from being dignified with the title of My Lady. There are many other things necessary to make marriage desirable, besides wealth and title.—

The latter (she replied) I believe,

you think might be easily dispensed with.—

I honour rank, madam, when it gives lustre to virtue; but do not think it of sufficient consequence to palliate or gloss the vices which disgrace human nature; nor can I help frequently exclaiming, with the bard,

“What can ennoble knaves, or fools, or cowards?”

Alas, not all the blood of all the Howards!”

The appearance of company broke up the dialogue. The Marquis of Langly was one of the groupe; and I was heartily disgusted by the boisterous behaviour of this epitome of fashion. He has declared himself my admirer; and (strange to relate!) my aunt absolutely encourages his visits.

In the evening, we were at a ball, where

where I was again tormented by my fashionable lover.

Entering the breakfast-parlour the next morning, before Mrs. Merioneth was stirring, behold, another letter from the Priory presented itself. This letter so quickly following the other, greatly excited my curiosity.

I had determined not to betray the least symptom of anxiety; but, unfortunately, the entrance of my aunt put to flight all my wise resolutions, and (directing her eye to the letter) I exclaimed—What can be the matter at the Priory, to occasion Lady Derwent to write again so early?—

Oh! I suppose it is only to announce the marriage of your favourite (was her answer).—

God forbid! was my involuntary exclamation.



I hope, Laura, you do not condescend to be the confidante of a girl who is but too willing to rebel against the first wishes of her best friends!

I did not answer; and my aunt presented the letter, which I will transcribe as faithfully as memory will permit.

After relating the compromise they had made with Lord Merioneth, her ladyship stated, that my noble uncle deemed it quite necessary to forget his promise, and to insist on your immediate acceptance of Sir John.

I ventured (said her ladyship) to plead my promises to Albert, and my fears for the health of Ellen.—

His lordship, sternly interrupting me, replied—Your first promise to me, madam, was obedience; and don't let me be at the trouble of again informing you,



you, that I expect unequivocal compliance with every measure necessity may oblige me adopt.

Sir John entered, and I quitted the room.

In my own dressing-room, I was met by Julia, who entreated permission to visit her friend ; which I was constrained to refuse.

She called me unkind, and added, — As you have banished my brother, there is double cruelty in preventing my fulfilling his last wishes. —

Call not the conduct of your parents in question (said I) ; but ever remember, that the basis of their actions is their children's advantage. —

We parted ; and, the next day, being engaged to dine at Maplemount, we visited the invalid, and invited her to accompany us. Sir John was of

the party. She pleaded indisposition, and I excused her. Julia reluctantly left her friend, who, with great difficulty, wished us a pleasant ride.

Disappointment loomed on the brow of the earl, when I informed him Ellen was too much indisposed to accompany us.

Mere foolery (said he). She is too fullen to oblige us.

Heavily passed the day, and we returned home early in the evening.

On our arrival, every countenance betrayed confusion. Kitty appeared: I hastily asked her, if Ellen was worse? I hope not, my lady:—but Lord Merioneth—

Speak! (said I, breathless with expectation)—What of my son?—

Before she could answer, Julia entered, and (with a frantic wildness in her

her looks) exclaimed—Ellen is gone; my brother is distracted; and I shall break my heart!—Oh, my unkind mother! is it thus you have acted for your children's good?—

Where is your brother?—

In the parlour, with the earl.

Thither I hastened, and found him at high words with his father, who was, in vain, insisting on his silence.

I will be heard (said he, furiously).—I will proclaim your baseness—your perfidy.—Is this your attention to your helpless friend? (cried he, seizing the hand of Julia, who had followed me to the room).—Where is the poor wanderer? To what difficulties may she not be exposed! No friend to soothe her woe-worn mind! No hand to support her fading form! No heart to throb for her unmerited misfortunes!—

These

These images seemed too powerful. His agitation stopped his words, and he suddenly quitted us.

Let him go (cried the earl); a fresh breeze in the wood will be of service to him.—

Shocked at the careless manner with which he treated the sufferings of my poor Albert, I took the arm of Julia, and we entered the chamber so lately occupied by Ellen. I rang for Kitty, and gave orders for the male domestics to go different ways in search of Lord Merioneth; and, in my name, entreat his return.

Kitty brought a letter she had found on my dressing-table.—It was from Ellen, and written with a trembling hand. It informed me where I might find her jewels, which are valuable; and where, likewise, were those of her mother.



We opened the cabinet, and found every thing in the most perfect order. The letter wrung my very soul. Above disguise, she informed me, that there was no way so likely to restore tranquillity to my family, as her absence from it.

Lord Merioneth (she added) must not, on my account, be an exile from his friends. He is yet near the Priory. I have seen him; but I have not spoken to him. I fly from his ardent, his persuasive, entreaties. I fly too from the fullsome addresses of a man I detest;—and I will, if possible, fly from the undermining treachery of my own sad heart. Yes, I will, if possible, before I again address your ladyship, conquer every sentiment but those that you may approve.—

Long and sad was the letter; but I have no spirits to transcribe it.



At length Albert returned, pale and trembling, but not so violent as when he left us. I prevailed on him to take some refreshment. He drank a glass of wine; and Julia begged him to relate all he knew of the flight of Ellen.

I knew nothing of it (cried he)—Would to Heaven I did!—

How then came you here?—

Fearing treachery (said he) I have never left the neighbourhood.—Severn and La Roche are at the next town, with the horses. All last night I waited and watched in the garden, in hopes of finding some means of speaking to Ellen; but in vain.—Fatigued in body and depressed in mind, I followed my friend to N\*\*\*\*, from which place I sent a note to Julia, by La Roche.—

Did you receive it (said I).

Yes, madam; I did.—

And

And did you convey it to Ellen? cried he.—

Yes, was her answer.

Merciful God! What then could occasion the step she has taken?—But she dreaded artifice; she mistrusted deceit.—This evening, I watched long and patiently, in hopes of seeing her. The frequent passing and hurry of the servants excited my curiosity: I broke from my concealment, and enquired whom they were seeking?—Imagine my surprise, when they told me, Miss Rutland was gone, no one knew whither! Almost deprived of reason, I joined in the search; but how ineffectually, you well know.—

Kitty was interrogated; but could give no satisfactory account.—Albert rose from his seat: he paced the room in agony. Julia wept bitterly. For myself,

myself, could I have recalled the dear wanderer, how willingly (had it depended only on me) would I have bidden them live for each other.—

At length, finding no farther search could be begun till morning, I prevailed on Merioneth to retire, and endeavour to get some sleep.—Most reluctantly he complied.

Long and miserable was the night.—In the morning we met again, pale and unrefreshed. During our cheerless meal the earl entered.—

Ladies (said he, ironically) the departure of this imprudent girl has given a very serious turn to the contour of your faces. You are unnecessarily anxious; and, perhaps, do not know, that the protector she has chosen will amply compensate for all she has left behind.—

Who

Who

Who dares assert she has a partner in her flight? cried Albert.—

I dare assert it, sir. The valet of Sir John is her companion,—her paramour.—

By heaven, it is false! (said my poor agitated Albert)—But if this pitiful calumny rests with that wretch, Sir John, his life shall answer his unparalleled baseness.—

Saying this, he rushed from the apartment. Julia followed him:—while Lord Derwent, fullenly regardless of our anxiety, deliberately retired.—

Sir John had prudently, during this scene of confusion, taken himself to Maplemount, where he is well known, and well received by the master of the mansion; and I rejoice at his absence.—

Some



Some moments of undescribable misery succeeded. Julia, pale and trembling, appeared.

Albert (cried she) is certainly gone to challenge Sir John.—

I followed him to the Park, where his horse and servant were waiting. I entreated his return home.—

Never (said he) till I have resentèd injury, and chastised baseness.—

The scene that followed I cannot describe; for I have no recollection of my own sensations.—

When more composed, the earl endeavoured to convince me that Oskam was really the partner of her flight.— He added, Sir John has long suspected there was some attachment between them.—

Why then, my Lord, did Sir John wish to make her Lady Bateman?—

Oh,



Oh, he never doubted her honour, though he might her prudence!— Besides, having thoroughly investigated the affair, I find Oskam dined here, drank freely, and left the Priory early, nearly at the same time Ellen was missing—

My dear papa (cried Julia) you are certainly misinformed:—Ellen is not capable of so mean an action.—

I will not be answered, young lady. Retire to your apartment, and leave this matter to me.—

In pity, my Lord, order the carriage, and follow Albert to Maple-mount.—

Oh, make yourself perfectly easy, madam. Sir John will not fight him: he has given me his word he will not. La Roche will take care of him, and he will return improved.—

He is a maniac experience must cure.—

Finding my situation excited so little sympathy, I withdrew to the chamber of Julia, whom I found greatly indisposed.—

At dinner Sir John appeared, and made a great merit of his forbearance in not fighting my son, who had actually fought him for that purpose.—

Then he has been with you, sir?—

Yes, my lady.—

And whither is he gone?—

To London, in pursuit of his chamber (said the unfeeling wretch); but he will have a fine dance; for she has fairly distanced us all.—

Here he produced a letter, said to be written by his valet, and sent to him express; in which, after begging pardon for supplanting his master, he

adds—

said—The chaise is now waiting to convey us to the land of Hymen.—

I was staggered for a moment; but recollection soon convinced me it must be a forgery:—but, as I could give no account of her retreat, I could not vindicate her conduct: and, had I shown the letter which was left for me, it would have been deemed the effect of her artifice, more effectually to deceive me.—

The gentlemen soon left the room; and, nearly, at the same time, Lord Severn entered it. He came to inform us that Albert was set out towards London, and that he intended instantly following him:—he begged us to be composed, for that he would do all in his power to serve his friend.—

I am come (said he) at his request,

to inform you that he is safe, and gone in search of Ellen.—

He agreed with us in thinking the reports so injurious to Ellen were the fabrications of Sir John, of whom he has the most despicable opinion.—

Dear Severn (said Julia, rising from her seat, and presenting her hand) how you rejoice me, by your confidence in my poor Ellen!—It is—it *must* be all a falsehood; and her virtues cannot be eclipsed by the calumny.—Trust me, she will rise brighter from the mist they have thrown around her.—

At least (cried Severn) my sweet girl, we will never condemn her, till she condemns herself.—

He soon after departed, loaded with our blessings.

AN-

ANOTHER day is past, and no news of my son. Sir John is here constantly; but I shun him as much as possible. I am lost in conjecture.— Surely Ellen cannot have deceived me. My dear friend, if it is possible, do endeavour to trace these loved fugitives, for

Your wretched friend,

HARRIET DERWENT.

THIS is, my sweet Ellen, nearly the contents of her ladyship's letter.

After I had twice perused it, my aunt cried—What think you now of Miss Rutland's elopement?

That she is fled from persecution; but without a companion. My life for her conduct!—As for this story, it is too bare-faced to be a moment thought



of. Can the insolent assertions of Sir John be of sufficient consequence to stamp infamy on the character of Miss Rutland?—  
 There is mystery in this affair (said Mrs. Merioneth) which time may develop.

Not much to the honour of those concerned in the conspiracy (said I); for I think the earl is not quite so innocent of this pretty calumny as he would like to appear.—

For shame, Laura!—treat the representative of your father with more respect.—

It is viewing him in that light (said I) which rouses my indignation; for he does not possess a single virtue which adorned my father.—

Mrs. Merioneth gave a turn to the conversation; and I took an opportunity

nity of returning to my dressing-room, while my aunt was engaged in giving domestic orders.

There a thousand anxieties overpowered me: I was in terror for your safety—alarmed for poor Merioneth—and in agonies for Lady Derwent and our little Julia.

(I was engaged to a card-party in the evening:—no possibility of avoiding it, as I had been invited for several days.

There Lord Langley pestered me with his impertinent attentions. To avoid his importunities, I sat down to play—put my partner out of humour, lost every trick; called him sometimes Lord Merioneth, but oftener Miss Rutland; got up horribly out of luck, and half-vowed never to touch another card.

On my return home, I was severely lectured by Mrs. Merioneth, who had witnessed my inconsistencies. I pleaded ill health, and hurried off to bed; and arose in the morning unrefreshed.

On my entering the breakfast-room, your welcome packet most agreeably presented itself. I devoured the contents; and, all ecstacy, could scarcely command my features sufficiently to prevent suspicion; but, recollecting the necessity there was for secrecy till some method could be devised of removing you farther from my plotting uncle and his detestable accomplice, I smoothed my brow to the same pensive cast it wore the evening before.

I met my aunt at breakfast.

Do not accuse me of duplicity, Ellen!—remember I have the authority

of an eminent writer, to assert, that a woman of virtue may possess art, though she should be sparing in the use of it.

We talked the affair over again and again; but my aunt declared she could make nothing of it. Company dropped in, and I hurried off to finish my letter.

And here, my dear Ellen, let me give you the best advice in my power. Let me inform you that, since the commencement of this letter, your second packet has come to hand. I think you had better remain in your present abode till I can inform you what plans Severn and Merioneth pursue to discover your retreat; which I will, by some means or other, as soon as I know where to address a letter. Inform Merioneth that you are in a place  
of



of safety; but let me add, that should any event occur to make your present retreat hazardous or unpleasant, and (though unwilling to alarm you), I must confess I have fears that the person, who is said to be your companion, is only employed to discover your retreat; therefore, should necessity or prudence induce you to leave your present abode, go immediately to London; and, at the house of Mr. Harris, the late agent to my father, (whose address I inclose, with a letter) you will find a safe asylum; where I am certain they will be proud to contribute to your comfort. The dreary month of November is fast approaching, which will hurry us to the capital.

Yours, &c.

LAURA MERIONETH.

L E T-



## LETTER XVI.

*Lady Laura to Miss Rusland.*

Twickenham, Oct. 14.

MRS. Merioneth has just received another letter from Devonshire, by which I learn that Severn found Merioneth with Clifford; that they have been indefatigable in their enquiries at every inn where it was likely you could be heard off; but without success.

Despairing of finding you in London, they are about to return into the country, where they think you must be concealed. Merioneth affirms he will not leave an inch of ground un-

trod

trod till he has found you. And now the point is, will you abide the search, or make an immediate escape?—Were it me, I do believe I should be half-inclined to stay, and be discovered:—but this very delicate point I must leave to your own judgment; only I entreat you to give me information of all your movements.

Interrupted!—How tiresome!

MERCY on me!—On entering the parlour, behold! Clifford was the first object which presented itself. Surprise struck me speechless, and I believe I looked like a fool.

At last, I think, he said that he feared by my silence, I was offended at his temerity in writing to me.

I told

I told him, that as I had objected to a correspondence, I was astonished he should write without permission.

He owned his fault, and pleaded hard for pardon.

Having never been seriously offended, it would have been a mere farce to have pretended violent anger; so I even suffered him to make his peace.

Fortune for once favoured me: my aunt was gone to pay a friendly visit to a sick dowager; and, while Clifford was with me, sent word me should dine out. He took a dinner with me; and from him I learned that Merioneth and Severn had actually set out for Devonshire.

He speaks in high terms of Merioneth, and has no doubt of your innocence. I entirely agreed with him

on

on that head, but was profoundly silent  
on the subject of your retreat.

At length I close this long letter,  
and remain

Your sincere friend,

LAURA MERIDETH.

P.S. Clifford is returned to London.

Your manuscript (in the language of  
Shakspeare) *beguiled me of my tears!*—

How I mourned the sufferings of your  
parents!—How I hate that brute your

grandfather!—How I admire Miss  
Rutland departed, and Miss Rutland

the survivor!—You must be happy:  
fate owes you a recompence for the

miserics it inflicted on your friends.  
Bear up, my dear Ellen: and live for

Albert.—It must—it shall be so.  
I am, my dear friend,  
Your sincere friend,  
Laura Merideth.

know



know Lady Derwent dearly loves you. She is obliged to speak foreign to the feelings of her heart, when she condemns the attachment of her son. I wish I could offer you an asylum here; but Mrs. Merioneth would, I am sure, oppose it—fearful of appearing to sanction, by such a procedure, the disobedience of her nephew. Hang this family pride!—what troublesome old lumber it is!

—Here is poor Clifford, almost afraid to venture beneath our right honourable roof; but when we come to London, I shall insist on his being admitted as my favourite. I put off the evil day as long as I can; for I do not like to quarrel with Mrs. Merioneth—which I fear will be the case, whenever she discovers that I admit Clifford as a lover. She is more fond than ever of  
family



family distinctions, since her late reconciliation with her noble brother; but she is a good woman, and possesses a thousand virtues to compensate for this failing.

Adieu!

LET-

## LETTER XVII.

*Miss Rutland to Lady Laura.*

Ivy Farm, Oct. 20.

TEN thousand thanks, my loved, esteemed, ingenuous friend, for your welcome packet, which I have just fetched from the post-office. Many hours of wretched anxiety have I passed since the conclusion of my last letter; but your affectionate solicitude, and kind assurances of friendship, have, in some degree, restored my almost drooping spirits.

Heavens! what a chain of complicated falsehoods is my unhappy destiny obscured with! The supposed con-

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F

panion

panion of the fervile Oskam! How could the monstrous idea ever gain, for a moment, the ear of reason?—But the base asserters of it know its falsehood!

Dear Merioneth, how my heart beats with gratitude for your generous confidence and unceasing solicitude! Nor am I less indebted to my ever-loved Lady Derwent, and her amiable Julia. I think it will be most prudent to avoid, if possible, the meeting with Merioneth. Write to him, dear Laura; entreat him to be patient; assure him of my innocence; tell him I am safe; and would endeavour to be contented, could I hear he was happy. I accept, with gratitude, your kind recommendation to Mr. Harris; where I will patiently remain till your ladyship's

ship's arrival in London (which I hope, will not be long); and then we will determine what plan to pursue, whether to make a private application to my grandfather, or publicly to avow my residence, and sink my small fortune for my future subsistence: as Lady Derwent once informed me, that she had never touched the principal; for, when the interest was not sufficient, she had herself made up the deficiency, Generous Lady Derwent!—never will I repay such goodness with the basest ingratitude.

Adieu, my kind, my considerate friend! and believe that, in my orisons, Lady Laura and the deserved partner of her heart are ever remembered by her grateful and affectionate

ELLEN RUTLAND.  
P. S. By



**F.S.** By some means or other, entreat Merioneth not to seek Sir John. Oh, my friend, you know not the agony I feel at the bare supposition of such an event.

**LET-**

## LETTER XVIII.

*Ofham to Sir John Bateman.*

Ivy Farm, Oct. 20.

GIVE me joy, your honour!—I have at last discovered the retreat of your charmer. Many a weary mile have I travelled in pursuit of her, little thinking she was the whole time within twenty miles of the Priory. Ah, gold! potent gold!—where is the charm thy influence will not unbind? Aided by this powerful auxiliary, I am now writing this from a chamber adjoining the one occupied by your fair. I think, if all my plans answer, she will not sleep another night be-

neath this roof. But, perhaps, your honour may like to know how I got footing here.

To be clearly understood, I must go back to the time we both (so *à-propos* for my schemes) made our exit from the Priory.

Now you must know, from the single circumstance of her being up the night we attempted her chamber-door, I concluded she was plotting her escape; and I had seen the blustering Merioneth walking part of the night upon the lawn, as if waiting her arrival. It was this induced me to propose your getting into her room, where you might possibly have made your own terms with her:—at least, your being alone all night with her, might have raised some doubts in the mind of her spark, which might have work-

ed

ed their final separation; for I intended whispering, in the morning, among the servants, where your honour had passed the night; and you know, from the earl we had nothing to fear. But here we were foiled, and my plans were all to be fresh laid.

I was very particular in watching her; and, the day you and the family dined at Maplemount, I was very attentive to the lady's motions. I saw her walk on the lawn; but she did not appear as if she intended to go any farther. However, during the time we gentry of the pantry were taking our usual glass, the lady in question fairly distanced us. From a calculation of the time, it occurred to me that she must have taken the caravan, which passes the Priory three times a week, on its way to meet the mail.



No sooner was I informed of her departure, but this thought occurred; and no sooner did it occur, than I determined to follow her. So, instantly saddling Sorrel, I set out in pursuit of her.

I rode for some miles before I saw a soul. At last I came to a turnpike. I enquired if any carriages were on the road, and was told, several.

Was the caravan gone?  
In a surly tone, I was bid ride on, and see.

I did so; and after about an hour's hard riding, overtook a stage-waggon; and, from the driver, I learned that the caravan was about two miles before him, as he judged by the time.

Night was now come on, and I in a strange road. I again put spurs to Sorrel, but without effect; for,

like

like Balaam's ass, she would not move a step. I then perceived, that, in my ardour to get on, I had missed the road; as the waggon I had before passed seemed, by the sound, to be now in a different direction.

What was to be done? Sorrel still resisted my spurring; and I was obliged to dismount, and lead him, in hopes of gaining some shelter for the night.

At last, I came to a miserable hovel, where I safely lodged my sullen companion, and began to make the usual enquiries about the object of my pursuit. To my great mortification, I was informed, that the caravan must be, by this time, at M\*\*\*\* where it would meet the mail; and that the passengers in it were an elderly gentleman and a very handsome young lady, who looked very ill, and wanted to stay

there all night. — How damned unlucky! they could not accommodate her.

But (added my informer) I dare say, if you want that young lady, you may find her to-morrow at M\*\*\*\*; for, I am certain, she cannot pursue her journey. —

I hope not (thought I); but, you may suppose, I did not say so.

There was no conveyance that could carry me on to M\*\*\*\*; so I was necessitated to stay the night where I was. I sat up in the chimney-corner, as there was no bed to spare; and, in the morning, to my great mortification, found Sorrel was really lame. — Here was another disappointment; as I had to wait some time for a higgler's cart, that was expected there on its way to M\*\*\*\*.

At length the cart came, and a sorry conveyance

conveyance it was; but better than none.—I put up at the inn where the mail went from, and recommenced my enquiries concerning the passengers in the caravan.—They went on in the mail, was the answer I received.

It was from M\*\*\*\* that I wrote that letter to your honour, thinking it might give the ladies of the Priory some doubts of her conduct: if they did not credit it, they could not confute it; which would effectually prevent their again receiving her at the Priory.

From thence I took post-chaise to London, searched every inn, questioned every coachman, bribed every chambermaid; but gained no information. At length, after innumerable <sup>fatigues</sup>, I got sight of the identical driver of the mail, who informed me, that he had seen such a person as I described,



ed, at the inn at M\*\*\*\*, with an old gentleman;—the latter he brought to town; but the lady was left behind.

Here, at last, was something like a clue to work from. I replenished my purse, by pledging my gold watch, as I was not provided with cash for so long a journey; and, seating myself in the mail, was soon whirled back again to M\*\*\*\*.

I took up my lodging at the inn I have before named; but, thinking the landlady was in the secret, by the short answer she before had given to my enquiries, I made no more, but looked out for myself.—I did so; but without success.—I traversed every inch of ground on which stood a house, and peeped into every place likely to contain a human being; but could not discover the object of my search.

Hopeless

Hopeless of finding her, I was this day taking a solitary glass of wine after dinner, and ruminating on the cursed awkward figure I should cut before your honour, on my return to you, and plotting what account I should give to the ladies at the Priory, when asked after my supposed companion; when, to my utter astonishment, she passed the room I was sitting in.—She advanced to the bar, in the very dress she had on when she left the Priory, and asked, if there were any letters for Miss Sedgwick?—

You have had many a weary walk after them, miss (said mine hostess); but (presenting the letters) they are come at last.

She courtesied her thanks, hastily paid for them, and instantly departed; and I as hastily followed to trace her retreat.

Unperceived,

Unperceived, I saw her enter a neat farm-house, about a mile from the road; and, being satisfied as to the place of her abode, I was returning to my inn, when a decent-looking man (who, I suppose, had observed me frequently look back) bluntly asked me, who I was looking for?

Thinking I might profit by his acquaintance, as I supposed he belonged to the house, I sighed deeply, and told him, I was in pursuit of an unhappy young woman, who had fled from the best of friends and tenderest of husbands, who were inconsolable for her loss.

He eyed me with curiosity, and was attentive to my story.

I am ordered by her husband (said I) to give this purse (shaking one with a few

few guineas in it) to the first person who shall give me the least information of her.—

Say you so, my lad? then, mayhap, I am your man.—Is she handsome?—

As an angel!—

Come on, then; you shall have a peep at a 'nation pretty girl, my wife has got for a lodger:—but mind the bargain.—

If it should be *my sister*, the purse is all your own.—

And the gentlewoman your's, if she belongs to you:—so let us go finish the bargain over a tankard.

I thanked him, but declined his offer; saying, should my poor sister see me so unexpectedly, it might have the worst of consequences.—If it was her he spoke of, she must be slowly prepared for an interview.—

Come



bl. Come along (said my sister) your  
young gentleman is bravely well-  
bred, and never comes into a room  
without knocking at the door, so you  
may easily step out of the way.

bl. Your honour may suppose I did not  
want much entreating, for we went.

I was introduced to the good wo-  
man of the mansion, and told them a  
probable and sorrowful tale, that my  
sister, whom I was seeking, had been  
lately married to a most deserving gen-  
tleman; but had, without giving any  
reason, eloped from him; that she was  
the best young creature in the world;  
and we were all certain, that an un-  
happy malady must have touched her  
brain, or she would not have left us a  
prey to such distress.

—It is mainly shocking (said mine  
host) but where is her husband?

No improper questions; and it would have puzzled some shallow schemers to have answered it:—but I cannot be easily put out of my way; and, to increase the pathos of my tale, I replied, that he was so ill with grief, he could not leave his chamber.

Good luck! it is deadly shocking! and I always thought there was something very strange in young madam's manner; for you must know, she begged, as if it were for life, that my gaffer and I would never answer any questions about her; and, if any body asked where she came from, we were to say, from a nunnery in France. Besides she writes, and sends to town for books, and reads them all day long; and sometimes her poor eyes are so red with crying, it grieves one's heart to look at her.—But, I hope, if this is the same young  
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lady that you are looking for, that you won't go to vex and plague her, when you get her back; for, poor soul! she must not be blamed for her afflictions.—

No; never shall it be named to her (said I). We only want to get her home, and she shall then be entirely her own mistress: and, if she can give her mother any reasons why she dislikes to live with her husband, he has agreed to allow her an income, and let her return to her mother.—

They said, it was all very good, and vastly kind; but, as it was time for her to come down to supper, I must retire.

I proposed returning to the inn.—The night was dark and wet, and the farmer opposed it.—I warmly protested, that I would not suffer myself to be  
seen.

seen till I had more time to reflect in what manner to act.—At last they sent me up stairs, till the fair one retires for the night, when I am to join them again, and consult how to proceed.

Always provided with writing equipage, I have written thus far from the chamber adjoining Ellen's; but I now hear her retire, and lock her door:—I must, therefore, steal softly down stairs to meet my necessary allies.

Five o'clock in the morning, Oct. 27.

(In Continuation.)

ON my return last night, to mine host, we talked over various plans, and I found he would be very obedient to any one I should adopt: so we drank success to our just designs, and future



happiness to my sister, till the heavy ale operated so very powerfully on all three (for Mrs. Jones was one of the council) that it was with great difficulty we ascended the stairs.

When I got into the chamber, I threw myself upon the bed, and never woke till five o'clock this morning. — It is too early to begin action; so I will give you a rough sketch of my plan.

I first informed them, that I saw the lady clearly as she came up stairs, peeping from the door, holding it a jar; that she did not perceive me; and that she was the very sister I was looking for; that I would, as this morning, have a chaise and two men ready in the road under the garden hedge, where she always walks for half an hour before breakfast, when the weather is favourable; and, thanks to  
dame ]

dame Fortune, for an autumnal morning, this is a very fine one.

I intend forwarding this to your honour through the means of the farmer; and to account for my sending a messenger, I shall tell him, that I mean to travel very slowly with my sister, that you may be prepared to receive her, and she the better reconciled to returning home.

I must be excused for remarking, that as money is the very soul of intrigue, your honour must, for once, wave your partiality for it.—I must have a draught on your banker for, at least, two hundred pounds, forwarded to me at the house of Craddock, where I mean to take your fascinating fair one.—Craddock is faithful; but she must be well paid; and, from the plan I have laid down, I think there is now

and danger of Lord Merioneth being beforehand with you; and yet I would give fifty guineas to know where those letters came from, which I saw her receive.—If they were from her deary, he will be a devilish while before he gets an answer!—But, hold! I hear the farmer in the yard, and must go to secure his assistance, and remind him of his last night's promises.

---

IT is all settled. A man waits to convey this to your honour. The farmer's wife is gone to market, and he is going into the fields. I must instantly to the inn, and bring down a chaise. Bribery will secure the driver in my interest, and we shall meet no obstructions

obstructions from the family.—It is  
 near the hour of Miss Rutland's rising,  
 and I am off to prepare for her.—Haf-  
 ten the draught, and follow, as soon  
 as possible, to secure your charmer, and  
 applaud.

Your devoted  
 OSKAM.

LET-  
 G



turn to the Priory!—Feeling so devil-  
ishly mortified, I have scarcely patience  
to recount the particulars of my dis-  
appointment and acknowledged

## LETTER XIX

*Osram to Sir John Bateman.*

I believe, in my last, I left off at the  
October 27, 179—

HELL and furies! I am again out-  
witted;—and by a woman too! So  
ably as all my schemes were laid!—  
so properly my whole plan adjusted!—  
when (to my eternal disgrace) this  
witch in woman's form is miles beyond  
my reach.

I shall send this express to Maple-  
mount, where I conclude you are, and  
where I think you had better continue;  
as you may hear intelligence in De-  
vonshire that may lead to the discovery  
of her retreat.—Perhaps she will re-

turn to the Priory!—Feeling so devilishly mortified, I have scarcely patience to recount the particulars of my disappointment: and yet to be acquitted of negligence, I must relate the circumstances.

I believe, in my last, I left off at the moment of my going to the inn, to bring the chaise to the farm. The chaise was ready, and two stout fellows engaged to assist me in conveying her over the hedge.

Not knowing any one was near me, I was relating to my assistants the necessity there was for their steady exertions,—that the screams of the lady must not alarm them,—that she had broke out of a private madhouse, on purpose to make away with herself,—and that I was going to take her to her friends, who would never more suffer

fer her to leave their own house. Still farther to satisfy their consciences, I gave each a guinea, with a promise of farther reward if they conducted themselves properly. My bumkins listened and believed; but mine host, suddenly interrupting me, asked, if the young lady wore a blue riding-dress?

I answered in the affirmative.—

Then you may spare yourself the trouble of going to farmer Jones's; for that young lady is many miles from here.—

How! (said I). Dare you assert such a falsehood? I have just left the house she is now in.—

Then you are a devilish quick traveller! (said he, dryly): for I think she is at least forty miles distant.—

My bumkins, who had been previously

viously paid, were now sinking off, rather inclined to grin at my disappointment.—All that I could learn of the landlord was, that a young lady, whom he had before seen come there for letters, came last night to the house, a few minutes before the mail, in which she eagerly secured a seat; that she had nothing with her but a small bundle; and told the driver she was going the whole journey.—From all these circumstances, I thought her flight was occasioned by the letters she had so lately received; and that she was actually gone to London, to place herself under the protection of Merioneth.—But your intelligence of his being in Devonshire entirely overturns that supposition\*.

\* Sir John's letter does not appear.

Uncertain



Uncertain on what to determine, I returned to the farm.—The landlord's intelligence was literally true.—She was missed at breakfast, and sought for without effect. A note found in her room, implied that she knew of my being in pursuit of her, with the utter contempt she felt for me and my employers.—The small sum due to the farmer was likewise left with the note.

At this instant, a decent-looking man, in black, made his appearance. I found, by the respect paid him, that he was no less a personage than the village-curate. The farmer instantly began telling him the tale, and concluded by showing him the note. I endeavoured to support my own cause, but without effect.

Mr.

Mr. Jones (said he) you have been deceived: an insane woman could not have written that note. I lament that your credulity has forced a persecuted woman from a peaceful asylum; but yet I trust, that power who guards the innocent will alike secure her from the arts of her own sex, and the machinations of our's.—

Curse on the preaching fool!—I feared he was about to sermonize me; so, *sans ceremoni*, I returned to my inn, from which place I am writing this.

Your seasonable supply I shall expend in future search; for which, I think, I have your permission. Forward your commands to Craddock, where I shall take up my abode. Depend on my unremitting attention

to

to procure intelligence; and rely  
on the first information of success  
from

LETTER XX.

Your devoted

OSKAM.

P.S. I think it will be of more ser-  
vice to our schemes, for you to con-  
tinue near the Priory a few weeks  
longer. Is there nobody about there  
that you could bribe for intelligence?

BATEMAN.

LET.

LET.

## LETTER XX.

*Sir John Bateman to Oskam.*

Maplemount, Nov. 1.

SO she has again escaped you?—Perish such cautious plans! Why did you not force her away the first moment you had sight of her?—You would have me stay here;—for what? Either to fight for a woman, or be posted as a coward. No, rascal! I shall instantly come to London, to watch your conduct; and mind that you attempt not again to impose on the confidence of

BATEMAN.

LET-



## LETTER XXI.

*Miss Rutland to Lady Laura.*

London, Nov. 4.

AGAIN, my charming friend, has your persecuted Ellen been unexpectedly hurried from her retreat; but, profiting by your kindness, I am now safe under the hospitable roof of your friend Harris, who endeavours, by every possible means, to restore my health, and amuse my spirits: but the hopes of soon seeing your ladyship, with the certainty of being at last in a place of safety, will, I think, operate powerfully to the restoration of both.

To

To account for my sudden journey to this capital, I must inform you, that, immediately after I had closed my last letter, I was struck with astonishment on beholding Oskam in earnest conversation with the farmer at whose house I resided. All your suspicions rushed with force on my memory:—I had no doubt but my retreat was discovered, and perhaps some plan in agitation, which would place me in the power of Sir John.

I ruminated on my situation till the hour of supper. In the first moment of surprize I had flown from the window, fearful of being seen; and, by so doing, lost the advantage of knowing whether Oskam was in the house, or whether he was gone on: I was willing to hope the latter, as he was in

a travelling dress, though not on horse-  
back.

In this hope, I, as usual, met the fa-  
mily at supper; when I was given to  
understand that particular enquiries  
were making after a run-away lady:—  
the sin of ingratitude, too, was slightly  
touched on; and, in short, from the  
loquacity of Mrs. Jones, enough trans-  
pired, to tell me, I was betrayed.

I took no notice of the discourse;  
for I dared not trust myself to answer,  
fearing the tremor of my voice would  
betray that I knew but too well the  
object they alluded to; and, as I had  
not before related any particulars of my  
situation, I did not feel at that time  
disposed to admit them to my confi-  
dence; besides they might have sup-  
posed all I could say was only made  
up to serve my own purposes. Too

credulous

credulous to distinguish truth from falsehood, my relating facts to them could have been of no service; as they possessed neither abilities nor power to protect me from insult, or secure me from artifice.

Thus confirmed in the necessity of my immediate departure, I early retired to my chamber, where I was for some time employed in collecting my few necessities together.

Adjoining the room I occupied was one not used by the family, except on particular occasions. Suddenly I heard the door open, and some one enter it. My senses nearly forsook me; for a presentiment occurred, that Olkam was there.

Gracious God! (sighed I) for what am I thus pursued? and why so cruelly tormented?



After a moment's recollection, I determined on leaving the farm that very night; for who could tell but the next day might deprive me of the power to leave it?—My parcel was already complete, and I had on my travelling dress, which was convenient and comfortable.

It was now eleven o'clock:—the mail, I knew, would pass at twelve. I opened my door, and listened for some time. All was silent. I ventured down stairs; and, with trembling hand, unbarred the outer door. The dog knew my foot, and only silently fawned. I pulled the door after me, and, unmolested, gained the road.

The inn at M\*\*\*\* was not quite a mile from the farm. To this place I hurried on, with all the resolution

I could

I could command. The night was dark and wet: but I heeded it not; for the jarring elements make but little impression on the body when the mind is at variance with peace.

At length, wet and weary, I gained the inn. The mistress seemed surprised at my appearance, but forbore making any impertinent enquiries.— I followed her to a private room, where she humanely busied herself in drying my clothes. My hair, which had hung over my shoulders, was dripping wet:—this I dried, as well as time would permit; and washed my head with brandy, to prevent cold, at the earnest request of my kind hostess. What I most feared for, was a note in the crown of my hat, but it fortunately escaped injury. I drank some mulled wine, changed my shoes, put

on a cap, which I had not before thought of; and by this time the mail arrived.

My kind hostess procured me a place. They stayed but to change horses. I entreated her acceptance of a small trinket, which I fortunately had in my pocket when I left the Priory. She received it politely, and asked if there were any thing else in her power that she could do serve me?

Only (said I) to be secret, if you should hear me enquired for.—

She promised for herself; but could not for her husband, who she was sorry had seen me.

I stepped into the mail, and after a fatiguing, though safe journey, I was happy to find myself at the house of Mr. Harris, whose wife received me with

with undisguised good-humour. I have been a week their inmate, but have not before had power to use my pen.

And now, my kind, my affectionate friend, accept my most grateful thanks for the interest you have taken in my affairs. In this house, surely, I am free from danger. Never can I be sufficiently thankful to Providence for my most fortunate escape from the snares of Oskam. I hurry from the idea: it sickens my very heart.

Write to me, I beseech you; and be particular in your enquiries after the family in Devonshire. I must still desire your secrecy as to my situation: the utmost I can agree to, is that Lord Merioneth should be informed I am in a place of safety. This wish I think I hinted in a former letter, and doubt



not but you have before this given him that intelligence.

After your ladyship's arrival in London, I will determine on some plan for my future residence. I will write to Lord Merioneth, if you can forward me his address. I will endeavour to convince him of the necessity of our separation—I will persuade him to submit to ills we cannot alter—to wait the dawning of happier days, in full confidence of my inviolate affection for him. Yes, my friend, I can write to him; but I must not trust myself to see him. I could not witness his unbiassed affection:—I could not hear his ardent entreaties, without forgetting at once the resolutions I have formed, and the obligations I owe his family.—The subject becomes painful:—I must close

close my letter. Farewell, and do not  
fail writing to

Your affectionate

ELLEN RUTLAND

## LETTER XXII.

*Lady Laura to Miss Rugland.*

MY DEAR ELLEN,

Twickenham, Nov. 7.

YOUR pretty epistle was, at the time it was delivered, the best cordial my heart could receive. At any time, news of your safety must be welcome : but I have been, since the conclusion of my last letter, particularly anxious for you : fearing that you must either suffer Merioneth to discover your retreat (for I have no doubt but he will search every village in Devonshire) or be exposed to a hasty journey, in which

which I feared the agent of Sir John might, by some means or other, gain sight of you. All my consolation was, that, if you did escape, I had fortunately provided an asylum for you.— I wrote to Mrs. Harris, to prepare her for your appearance, and to confine her to secrecy on the subject:— that done, I waited with much anxiety for the letter which I yesterday received. Need I say I rejoice in all your escapes, and heartily congratulate you on being at last in a place of safety?

I forwarded, before the arrival of your last letter, an anonymous note to Merioneth, in which I assured him of your safety: this I sent by a private hand to London, to be there put into the post-office, that there might be no suspicions where it came from. I have  
heard



heard nothing from the Priory since my last. Keep up your spirits: we shall soon be in London; and then I hope to place you in a situation at once eligible, agreeable, and (I trust) beyond either the insolence or the artifice of your persecutor.

Heigho, Ellen! do you conjecture—will you believe, that I am absolutely on the point of commencing Beatrice?—I suppose you are a true woman, and on the rack of curiosity to know how this wonderful event has so suddenly been brought so near to a conclusion; and, as you are a great favourite, I will relate particulars.

Know, then, that one morning last week, I was just set down alone to the breakfast-table; Mrs. Merioneth, rather unwell, had taken her breakfast

fast in bed:—suddenly the door opened,—and Clifford, pale and disordered, made his appearance. I was not so much surprized at the visit, as at the early hour in which it was made. I hastily advanced to him, and anxiously enquired the cause of his disorder.

My sweet Laura (cried he) compassionates my distress:—will she generously pity and soothe my disappointments?—

Can you (said I) for a moment doubt my willingness to participate and soothe your sorrows, from whatever source they may arise?—

I do not doubt (cried he); for you are an angel, born to comfort me:—but, ah! my love, all the golden dreams with which Plutus favoured me, are vanished into air—thin air!—

And

And is that all? (said I, laughing) — Did I not prophesy that an honest heart would be a bad companion to the shrine of fortune? — But come! take some breakfast; and then, let us talk over this woeful tale.

During our repast he related the following circumstances: — but take his own words.

“Immediately after my appointment to the office I held, Lord Derwent informed me, that, if I expected to push my fortune with success, I must pay implicit obedience to my superior in office. This obedience was severely exacted, and consisted of all that pride and caprice could possibly conceive; but I bore it without murmuring, unwilling to offend Lord Derwent, and hoping that, on his arrival in the metropolis, I might perhaps get the  
servile

fervile duties of my station lessened ;  
or, through his interest, effect a remove  
into some other department. In the mean time I was expected  
to attend public dinners and private  
parties, and to swell the list of depen-  
dents at the great man's levee. I sel-  
dom attended these ostentatious meet-  
ings, which I soon found was con-  
sidered into neglect of duty, and com-  
plained of to Lord Derwent, from  
whom I received a long written re-  
monstrance on the consequence of my  
disobedience. He complained loudly  
of my neglect of his friends, slightly  
hinted at the ingratitude of my con-  
duct, and urged me to be more atten-  
tive in future. Not to merit the epithet ungrate-  
ful, I endeavoured to overcome my  
dislike to Mr. B\*\*\*\*'s parties, and  
more



more frequently attended them. He visibly relaxed his arrogance, and frequently condescended to speak to me [no trifling favour in those circles].—The business of office, in which he had used to be very troublesome, he now left entirely to my management, and often complimented me on accuracy and dispatch. I was more at ease, and began to look forward with hope to future happiness.

“My Laura (I would mentally say), is superior to trifling delays; my income is equivalent to a genteel establishment; she will generously dispense with greatness; and a few months more may make her all my own.—Thus was I situated, when calling one morning on business, I was shown into Mr. R\*\*\*\*’s dressing-room. He was alone.

“Clifford,

Clifford, (said he, with the most complacent smile imaginable) you were positively the last person in my thoughts.

I bowed, and he proceeded—

Clifford, I think you need not be told, that I have a very great regard for you. Indeed, I promised my friend Derwent, that I would set you in a way to make your fortune. Your talents for business are good; and an opportunity has occurred of using them to advantage:—there is a very lucrative situation now in my power to give you. It is in India: but what is the place to a young man who has his fortune to make?—and you will in that station make it rapidly. I dare say, in ten years, you will be worth fifty thousand pounds; and, as a long voyage may not be agreeable without

a companion, I have, as a farther proof of my friendship, provided you one, whose fascinating powers (affecting to sigh deeply) I am but too well acquainted with. Nor is there another man on earth, to whose care I would confide her.—

“I suppose my looks betrayed my dislike of these half-formed proposals; for he exclaimed—You do not appear, Clifford, to relish the plan!—

“I cannot say, Mr. R\*\*\*\*, that I understand it. You must be more explicit.—

“He endeavoured to evade, for the present, any farther discourse on the subject; however, I was determined that he should clear up his mysteries, and beset him so forcibly with questions, that I drew from him something like an outline of his plan. It

was simply this:—his way of life had much exceeded his income, and he found it necessary to seek a lady whose fortune might repair the wreck of his own. Such an one he had found; but her friends objected to the union, until a frail fair one, who resided in his house, and who was known to have great influence over him, should be otherwise disposed of. He had made her a genteel settlement, and proposed her retiring from him. This was not sufficient for the friends of the intended Mrs. R\*\*\*\*; they positively insisted that he should procure her a husband, and send her out of the kingdom; and this very honourable office Mr. R\*\*\*\* intended for me.

You, my dear Laura, who had permitted me to look up to virtue and excellence like yours, may judge the con-



116 DERWENT PRIORY, OR,

tempt with which I received such insulting intelligence. It is sufficient to say, that we had many words, and parted in mutual disgust; he, I suppose, wondering that I could dare refuse such a golden bait; and I heartily despising the wretch who could use the name of friendship to cover the most selfish views, and to hurl unmerited misery on the head of a man whose interest he affected to think himself bound to promote. —

I retired to my lodgings, and wrote my resignation, as I well knew it would now be impossible to retain my situation, without making servile apologies for my warmth of temper; which I had determined never to do, — even if my existence had depended on it.

“Just after I had dispatched my letter to the office, I received one from

Lord

Lord Derwent, intended, I believe, to prepare me for the proposals Mr. R\*\*\*\* had unguardedly betrayed.

The India expedition, and the proposed union, were sophistically glossed over; but all led to the same end.

His lordship complimented me on having so powerful a patron, and urged me to throw aside all squeamish delicacy, as a play-thing, only fit for boys and women. The lady's present station (said he) is nothing to you. She is, I am told, a woman of sense; and I have no doubt but her future conduct will do credit to your name.—

His lordship concluded by observing, that it was not possible for me to reject so fortunate and advantageous a proposal; for (he added) it is a game in which you gain every trick, without a single hazard of loss.

II 3 Ah!

“Alas! he did not condescend to think that the hazard of my peace, or of my principles, was worth a thought.”

“I wrote an answer, in which I explained, as far as was necessary, the reasons of my conduct. I thanked Lord Derwent for his former kindness, and told him, I had determined on leaving a life of dependance to such as were better formed to bear insolence, and practise servility.”

“And now, Lady Laura, you are in possession of all the circumstances which gave rise to my uneasiness; for, in so much at variance with the gifts of fortune, how can I aspire to that honour which I so lately thought destined to afford all the happiness which this state of trial is capable of receiving?”

I believe I looked mortified; for he exclaimed—*I see I have offended you.*

Only by your last sentence (replied I, giving my hand).—Why will you know so little of *me*, as to suppose wealth has power to separate us?—Had you acted otherwise, I should have despised you!—as it is, you are dearer to my heart than ever.

I cannot repeat half his fervent acknowledgments for, what he termed, my disinterested conduct.

Yet (said he) the offence I have given your uncle will doubtless operate against any alliance with his family; and Mrs. Merioneth, attached to rank and fortune, will she ever hear of so unequal a connection?

Clifford (said I, seriously) you seem disposed to raise difficulties; imaginary



ones. In a very short time the law places my fortune in my own hands. My aunt must be made acquainted with the business. I am so much indebted to her for years of kindness, that I dare not treat her with reserve. As for the earl, his approbation is of no importance; it is easy to be indifferent to the opinions of those for whom we feel no affection. And now, tell me what you had to propose when you came here, to occasion that dolorous appearance. — I had nothing to propose (said he). I came but to see you, — to relate my disappointment — and to bid you adieu. — And where were you going afterwards? — To a small estate I have in Kent. — Aye, Clifford (said I) did you indeed

deed think my chains were so easily to be disposed of, that you could make your bow, take your leave, retire to solitude, and forget Laura!—Now tell me very sincerely, do you wish to leave me?

Never (said he, with fervour;—while he folded me to his heart) till the great leveler of nature shall demand a separation!—

The sincerity which beamed from his face, while he uttered this declaration,—his serious, yet ardent manner, gave my heart a sensation it had never felt before; while the delight, at finding myself so well beloved by such a heart as Clifford's, really occasioned the starting tears, which I could not restrain from falling fast down my face;—they fell not unobserved; and, to pacify my swain, I was obliged  
to

to confess that they were the tears of joy and not of grief. **WON**  
 Again I was thanked, a thousand times thanked for my condescension.—  
 At length I unwillingly hurried him away, expecting my aunt every moment to make her appearance; and I did not wish her to see him till I had in some degree explained our situation. I appointed him another meeting in the evening, when my aunt was engaged to a card-party of neglected virgins; of course, my attendance was easily dispensed with.

But I am interrupted. I will conclude my long story another opportunity.  
 In particular, the curate of Derwent, whom he had to greatly offended—  
 However, after some time, I brought her in the apparent good humour—  
**WON**

and

I NOW resume my pen, to continue my long narrative.

Soon after Clifford's departure, I hastened to the apartment of Mrs. Merioneth, to whom I briefly related his situation, my admiration of his conduct, and sentiments in this fa-

It is needless to recount the arguments made use of to combat my inclination, or the facility with which I refuted them. At length, my good aunt agreed that I had a right to please myself; but, she was sorry to say, I had made a choice which could not merit the approbation of my family; in particular, the earl of Derwent, whom he had so grossly offended.— However, after some time, I brought her into apparent good humour,—and she



she agreed to make no opposition to his visits, provided I made no particular agreement without her concurrence. To this I readily assented, and the day passed in tolerable harmony.

In the evening my aunt paid her intended visit; and, it is needless to add, Clifford kept his appointment.

You must excuse me for trusting to him the place of your retreat:—it was necessary I should have some adviser as to what method ought to be pursued to restore peace to the still wandering Albert.—We mutually lamented the false pride of my uncle, who thus wilfully exposed to misery an only son; and I am sorry to say that we naturally concluded that he was too well acquainted with the designs of Sir John.

At length it was agreed that Clifford should

should write to Merioneth, directing his letter to the Priory, as it was reasonable to suppose they would call there again before they returned to London. Severn is still with him.—To prevent any discovery which might distress you, he only, in general terms, stated (for he wrote while with me) that you were in the metropolis, in a place of safety, and under the protection of a woman of honour;—that if Albert would hasten to London, he would there receive every necessary information. This was dispatched to the Priory. Another, rather more explicit, was sent Lord Severn's house in London; so, either way, their search after your ladyship is likely to be concluded; and, surely, it is time it should:—six tedious weeks has he been in search of his fair one, and the

she would still wish to secrete her retreat. — For shame, Ellen! — have more consideration. — See him: — hear what he has to propose. I do not wish you to close with any hasty solicitation. I would not have you accept his hand without the consent (if not the approbation) of his family; but I am inclined to think the earl will yet relent. In the mean time, you must not wantonly add to the anxieties of Albert. In a week or two we shall begin London; and then I will talk over all these matters with you.

To return to myself; — Clifford staid with me till the arrival of my aunt, who coolly courted him, and he took his leave. My aunt, rather out of temper, swallowed a hasty supper, and retired to her apartment. I staid not long from mine; but the occurrences

of

of the day had so hurried my spirits, that sleep was for some hours a stranger to my eyes. — At length (to use your metaphor) the drowsy god shook his poppies over me, and I slept till a late hour the next day.

On entering the breakfast-room, judge my surprise to find that Clifford had been there, — had breakfasted with Mrs. Merioneth, — and departed, without waiting to see my ladyship. A little smile of triumph, which hung over the brow of my aunt, gave, in a moment, a suspicion that she had been tampering with my swain.

She did not suffer me to remain long in doubt, but led to a conversation by which I learned that she had appealed to his pride on the score of fortune; and (by raising every spark of that troublesome passion) had nearly persuaded



suaded him of the great impropriety of his present professions; that she had told him the alliance never could be sanctioned by my family, nor approved of by the world. — And I have told him (said she) that while you are with me, I can by no means admit his visits.

Then it is time, madam (said I, with firmness) that I should seek an asylum where I may without restraint receive my friends. —

You may receive them here, if I approve them. —

Our ideas, madam, on this head are so very different, that I never shall be brought to receive those you approve. For instance, you dislike Mr. Clifford, I detest Lord Langly. —

Lord Langly is a peer, and should always meet respect. —

Whether

Whether he deserves it or not?—

Certainly!—his rank should secure it him.

It is impossible (said I) for rank to secure respect, unless supported by merit.

I touched an unlucky subject; for my aunt, entirely out of patience, told me, no more fortune hunter should ever visit me again under her roof.

Highly exasperated at this prohibition, I reproached her with her breach of promise. She replied, I had first broken the agreement, by receiving him last night, without her knowledge. —How mean a subterfuge!

In short, not to tire you with particulars, I hastily retired, slipped on my riding-dress, ordered Fanny to pack up a change of clothes, and sent William for a chaise, —determined to try the

effect of a little spirit on this aunt of mine; besides, I intended to mortify Clifford, by leaving him to repentance. My intention was to come immediately to you, and there wait the near period of twenty weeks.

On my entering the drawing-room, where I expected to find my aunt, it was empty. She soon after entered, with an impatient enquiry, as to the reason of my appearance in a riding-dress.

I am sorry, (said I) that there should be any necessity for my appearance in this dress; but I cannot think of continuing in a house where I am not mistress of my own conduct.

Let us argue this matter fairly (said Mrs. Merioneth); and, if you are determined to leave the friend your departed parent so solemnly instructed you to respect, deign at least to inform

Clifford

R

her

her where you mean to fix your residence. You have nothing, Laura, to fear from my power: for, as you leave me by choice, I shall never seek to reveal you by compulsion.

Alas! all my pride was evaporating into air, and I was just going to make some ridiculous concessions, when Clifford was announced: — he was in a riding-dress, and appeared greatly embarrassed. We viewed each other with astonishment. Mrs. Merioneth left the room, I believe, a little ashamed of the part she had acted. Clifford walked up and down; but neither of us spoke.

To relieve myself from so unpleasant a situation, as well as to cure my beau of his taciturnity, I rang for Fanny, gave her some particular orders as to the disposal of my wardrobe, and to request her to be very expeditious.



Clifford, irresolute, advanced;— he paused, looked anxiously in my face, and entreated me to tell him, if his fears were all confirmed, and if I really was going to resign the protection of Mrs. Merioneth?

It is my present intention so to do, sir.—

Good Heaven! how you distress me! Reflect, I entreat you, reflect before you take so precipitate a step, which may hereafter involve you in innumerable difficulties. Young, beautiful, and wealthy, where can you find so proper an asylum as that you now possess?—

I have reflected, sir,—well, reflected on the attachment that man must entertain for me, who has thus needlessly exposed me to the necessity of this separation.—

Cruel,

Cruel, unkind Laura!

This was exactly what I wanted; well knowing his pride was ebbing out, when he began to reproach Fanny again entered;—the chance was waiting for me.

Where is Mrs. Menioneth?

In her dressing-room, my lady, and wishes to speak with you.

Tell her I will come directly (said I).

Clifford again advanced to me; for I had my hand on the door.—You are going (said he) without one adieu! Unkind Laura! is it thus we part?

I suppose I looked a little irresolute; for, tenderly taking my hand from the door, he continued, Will you not give it one hour's thought?—Will you thus readily resign, perhaps for ever, the protectress of your youth?—I came here to bid you an eternal farewell, being

convinced by Mrs. Merioneth (whose motives I revere) that it is the only honourable testimony I can give of my affection for you : and yet dign to believe, that it really is the most painful period of my life. Had I left you still enjoying the friendship and protection of Mrs. Merioneth, I had been comparatively a happy exile.—Oh! Lady Laura! (sinking on his knee) if you yet value the peace of Clifford, do not, I beseech you, venture thus unprotected on the vast ocean of life.—

Once (said I, with firmness) I had hoped to find in Mr. Clifford a faithful adviser, and a proper protector. A false pride has stepped in to separate us, and we part for ever. He arose, greatly agitated, and, irresolutely pacing the room, left me no comment on his silence.

Though

Although not less agitated than himself, I yet determined, if possible, to conceal my emotions.

As he again advanced towards me, I presented him my hand; at the same time I cried,—Mr. Clifford, I must wish you a good morning; or Mrs. Merioneth may suppose I do not intend seeing her before my departure.—

And why (his voice greatly softened)—why will you leave Twickenham, my dear, my interesting Laura? why will you renounce a friend that so sincerely loves you?—

Since we are come to interrogation (said I) why do you leave Twickenham, and the society of one that so truly esteems you?—

After all my inconsistencies (said he, sinking at my feet) will you again condescend to receive to your favour the

man



man that so little deserves your kindness.—

And where (cried I) is my security, that you will not again relapse into indifference?—

Your retort is unjust (said he); for, while I aimed at prudence, my heart revolted at indifference: nor have I ever possessed an idea of happiness divided from you. Say then, my dearest Laura, will you receive to your heart the man who has thus dared to trifle with your generous condescension?

I do not recollect what answer I made: but he flew to dismiss the chaise, and then entreated my permission to seek Mrs. Merioneth.

In less than half an hour he returned, leading in my aunt, whose eyes were swollen with weeping, as, indeed, were mine.

Ms. A.

Laura

Laura (said she) you have subdued me. Mr. Clifford has explained all to me; and I lament the uneasiness I have caused you. Mr. Clifford, I shall be happy to see you in the evening; at present you must excuse me.

He soon departed, and I took up my pen to relate these particulars to you.

In the evening he returned, and my aunt gave orders to be denied to Lord Langly. (There was condescension!) Clifford, all ease and gaiety, gave wings to time: before he left us, we agreed to leave Twickenham the beginning of next week. To-morrow he will return to London, in his way to Kent, where his own affairs call him. He will take charge of this packet. I forgot to tell you, that I have agreed to change my name the day I am of age, which will be within a little month.

Adieu, my dear Ellen: write once again, and it shall be answered in person by

Yours affectionate

LAURA MERIONETH.

## LETTER XXIII.

*Miss Rutland to Lady Laura.*

London, Nov. 10, 179—.

ACCEPT, dear friend of my heart, my sincere congratulations on those prospects of happiness which so cheerfully smile on you. Long, very long may they continue; nor Clifford ever cease to feel the value of that jewel he is about to possess!

This morning, in high spirits, he delivered your welcome packet. Ever solicitous to please, he had previously made enquiries at Lord Severn's, when that nobleman was expected in town, and was told it was very uncertain, as  
he



he was gone on a tour with Lord Merioneth. He left his name, with a note that he should be in London again in a few days, and requested that Lord Severn, should he arrive before him, would not leave town without seeing him. How considerate was this conduct!

Like you, Mr. Clifford urges me to see Merioneth; to clear myself from the base aspersions thrown on my character; and by no means, should it be offered, to accept again the protection of Lady Derwent, but continue in my present habitation till Lady Laura Clifford can offer me one, more commodious.

A thousand thanks for the kindness of this offer, made, I am certain with your entire approbation. It is not in words, my friend, to convey my sense of

of the many obligations I am under to your ladyship. A bankrupt in all but gratitude, I can only say, that, hopeless of repaying, I will never forget the many favours your friendship has conferred on me.

Mr. and Mrs. Harris are indefatigable in their endeavours to amuse me, and, at their earnest request, I have agreed this night to accompany them to the theatre. I find it is an amusement Mrs. Harris is extremely partial to, and often partakes of. I have been many times out, accompanied by Mrs. Harris; indeed necessity induced me, as I had many purchases to make, before I could appear at all decent. I have been fully employed in making up my apparel.

I rejoice in the near approach of your return to London. I cannot con-

sent

sent to receive Merioneth, unless in your presence, should he even arrive before you. Mrs. Harris writes to Mrs. Merioneth by this post, that her house is all in readiness.

Adieu, my dear friend. I hope shortly to embrace you.

Your's,

ELLEN RUTLAND.

LET

## LETTER XXIV.

*Lord Merioneth to Mr. Clifford.*

London, Nov. 17, 179—.

I HAVE found her,—I have seen her,—she is safe, and I am happy!—You are hourly expected in London, and yet I have not patience to wait your arrival; nor can I think of rest, till I have made you a sharer in my happiness.

As I have not seen or heard from you for some time, to be intelligible, I must go backwards with my tale.

Soon after my second journey into Devonshire, I received an anonymous note, that miss Rutland was safe and well.



well. I bore the London post-mark ; and I concluded, from that circumstance, that it was only a trick to delude my search. The silent taciturnity of the earl, which increased the distress of my mother and sister, and added fresh poignancy to the anxieties I already sustained for my dear, but suspected Ellen.

I staid but two days at the Priory, in which time, I made an effort to see Bateman, but without success. He had left Maplemount a few hours before my arrival.

Still, accompanied by my friend Severn, we recommenced our fruitless search. Wearied by ill success, and fatigued by the heavy roads, and bad accommodations, we arrived in London on the morning of that day, on which

How

you left it, and had only missed you by about half an hour. We received your letter, which revived all my hopes; and the note you had left that morning, confirmed my opinion, that you were absolutely acquainted with the retreat of Miss Rutland.

On examining your note, how great was my mortification, to discover that you had neglected naming any place where you might be found.—I hurried to the office at \*\*\*\*\*—Judge my astonishment:—you had resigned.—I hastened to your lodgings;—you were out of town.—I should instantly have set out for Kent, but feared meeting with a similar disappointment.

As there was no remedy, but patience, we agreed, should you not re-

turn that evening, that Severn should seek you the next morning, at Twickenham, (where we suspected you might be heard of), while I waited in London, in hopes of your arrival:—by this plan of operations, we thought it would be impossible for us both to miss you.

Early in the evening we renewed our perambulations, thinking we might, at some of the public places, gain a sight of you, if you were yet in London.

We set out on foot; and met, by accident, some young fellows of fashion, well known to Severn.—We adjourned to a tavern.—The bottle circulated briskly, and we did not separate without paying liberal libations to the rosy god. Deserted by our companions, we strolled into one of those houses, supported by the errors of one sex, and the treacheries

treacheries of the other.—Wine was called for, and Severn asked, if there were any fresh faces above stairs?

Only one (said the waiter) but I believe she is not to be seen to-night.—

Why not?

Because sir John Bateman's valet is expected.—

Does he often visit her?

Frequently.—We suppose she is placed here for his master.—

What is sir John in town?

Yes, he was here this morning.—

And is this young lady from the country?

I believe she is.—

Oh! my friend, pity my agonies.—

I supposed:—yes; I dared suppose this frail fair one was my angelic Ellen.—

Wine and passion had gained the dominion over reason, and surprise pre-



vented me from interrupting this discourse, between Severo and the waiter.

They ceased speaking. I arose, and insisted on being conducted to her apartment.—The waiter hesitated.—

Severo read my thoughts, and, because less interested, was more collected.

Come (said he to the waiter) only let us see the lady, and we engage to be prudent.

He accompanied his request with a proper donative.

I can admit but one at a time.—

Then let me go, said I.—

Severo expostulated, but I was resolute.

I followed the waiter through a gallery on the first floor. He pointed to a door, which opened into an elegant apartment.—I entered.—The lady rose at my entrance. What joy to my heart!—

heart!—She was indeed beautiful, but she was not Ellen.

I made a hasty exit, and returned to Severn, exclaiming, All is right!—What an idiot I must be!—

—Very true (said he, gravely): so you must to see so beautiful a creature alone, and not endeavour to amuse her: Come, waiter (continued he) let me see this divinity.

I expostulated, but without success. Go thy ways, sobriety (said he) and leave me to good spirits, good wine, and the goddess fortune.

I waited his return patiently till near ten o'clock, and then left word with the waiter that I was gone to Drury-lane.

On my arrival, I found the house extremely crowded. I endeavoured to bustle through the lobby, but could gain no accommodation. Returning, there—

therefore, down one of the avenues of the house, I found myself in a passage leading to the pit. There were but few people in it, and I carelessly threw myself along one of the benches.

An elderly gentleman soon after seated himself by me. He was intelligent, and we fell into conversation.—I learned that he was come to protect two ladies; but, through the crowd, had found it impossible to join them. At the end of the play, the house thinned apace: my companion took his leave, and went in search of his friends.

I was debating with myself, whether I should return in quest of Severn, or avail myself of the opportunity of seeing a favourite after-piece, which was just commencing, when my reverie was agreeably interrupted by the appearance of my friend.

This

This is beyond my hopes (said he); follow me to the pit, and see if you cannot discover

A pearl upon an Ethiop's arm.—

Leave your metaphors (said I) and speak seriously.—

Do you follow me (said he) and act seriously.—

Not a step till you explain; for you are really too much under the dominion of Bacchus, to be blindly obeyed.—

No, no; (cried he, laughing) I am enlisted under the banners of Venus, and she has directed me here in pursuit of a delicate little creature, that may lead to the knowledge of a sweet, pensive, love-lorn beauty; but this is no time for explanations: if you do not pursue this adventure, you merit not



the happiness, fortune seems preparing for you.

Without farther commenting on the ambiguity of his discourse, I followed him to the pit. It was now very thin; and, to have a better view of the company, we placed our backs to the orchestra, from whence I soon perceived Oskam and the girl I had before seen.

That is your allusion, said I.

Severn nodded.

See you no one else?

Not in particular, said I, peevishly; for though my hopes were not very high, I yet felt a sort of expectation that Ellen was in the house.

Just before the conclusion of the piece, I observed an elegant woman, plain, but genteelly dressed, in company with the very man I had been conversing with, and a middle-aged woman

of good appearance. A deep veil shaded her face, but her form was too deeply engraven on my heart to be easily forgotten.

It is Ellen; (said I to Severn) let me fly to protect her.

Have patience (said Severn), and watch the motions of Oskam. You know not the strength of his party, nor the depth of his plans; we are but two, and both unarmed: prudence may do much for us, but precipitation will ruin all.

I unwillingly acquiesced.

At length they rose to depart. We slowly followed them. The night was dark and wet. We had both great coats on, which the better disguised our persons. I heard her speak. I was near enough to touch her hand; but, fearing I should hurry her, I missed  
the

the opportunity. Suddenly I was jostled: and turning quick, beheld Oskam and his companion close behind.— To my great mortification, I, at the same moment, missed my friend:— to seek *him* had been to have lost sight of *Ellen*, without a clue to guide me to her residence. I determined, therefore, to keep between the parties. When arrived at the door, I found the rain had increased; and saw by the lamps, that a person I had before seen at the tavern had now taken charge of the lady, and that Oskam was departed. This increased my apprehensions; for I justly feared, whatever the plot, that there might be many concerned in it.

I was several times on the point of discovering myself to her; but the fear of alarming, without the power of protecting

recting her, withheld me. Besides, Clifford (to confess all my weakness) I wished, yet dreaded, to know, if Oskam was as great a stranger as myself to her abode; which I was that night determined to discover. You will condemn my suspicions, but the attendant circumstances must plead my excuse.

You must recollect, that I had received no explanation from Severn: that I saw her with people I had never seen before: that, though Oskam was not with her, he might be gone to some appointed place, or, perhaps, was even then in waiting, to convey her to his master. Gracious Heaven! what agony did that thought convey! Again the note occurred to me: "Miss Rutland is safe, and protected by a woman of honour." — This night, thought



thought I, will bring it to the proof; and wrapping myself up close in my coat, the better to prevent a discovery, I determined patiently to wait the developement of these seeming mysteries.

I made a sign to Severn, who was again in sight; but he could not conveniently come up to me. During this time, the heavy rain obliged the company to wait for carriages. It rather ceased; and the gentleman I had before seen, on my entering the house, desired the ladies, namely, Mrs. Harris, as I have since found her to be, and my sweet Ellen, to stay exactly where they were, while he went in quest of a coach.

Oh! do not leave us (said she) my dear sir; do not leave us!—Let us walk

walk together; perhaps we shall soon meet with a carriage.—

I dare not think of walking (replied her companion) consider the dampness of the evening, and the hazard I should run of increasing my cold.—

I beg your pardon, my dear madam, for having so little consideration; but, at least, let us all stay here together till a coach can be procured.—

My dear miss Rutland, you are alarmed without a cause.—

Indeed, I am not; I have seen a person of all others the most dangerous to my safety.

That, thought I, must be Osram.

But you do not see him now? (said Mrs. Harris.)—

No, thank Heaven! I am freed from that misery; and I think he has not observed me.—

Well,

Well, keep up your spirits. In a place like this, you have nothing to fear from violence; and, I think, we are proof against stratagems. I wish we were safe at home (replied the sweet girl.)

Then, do let Mr. Harris go in search of a coach.

She made no farther objection, and he departed. I saw she was greatly agitated, and was several times on the point of betraying myself; but a restless curiosity, to know the true character of her companion, prevented me.

The crowd had now greatly increased from all parts of the house; the rain, which had before ceased, again poured in torrents; and the cry of coach! coach! was vociferated from every tongue. The lady whom I have before noticed, as left by Oskam, under the

the protection of another person, kept her stand close to Miss Rutland, and endeavoured to discourse with her; she complained violently of heat and fatigue, and pretended to faint on the shoulder of the man that supported her. Various methods were used to restore her, and my gentle Ellen and her humane companion (who forgot they were not to be deceived by stratagem) were foremost in assisting her.

What shall I do, dear ladies?—Assist me with your advice (said the companion of the fainting fair).—May I intrude on your humanity to assist her, while I go in search of a carriage?—

Stay a few moments longer (said Mrs. Harris).—We every moment expect a coach, and perhaps can set you down—  
 The lady whom every tongue  
 Noticed as left by Orkney under  
 the  
 Which



Which way, dear madam, are you going?—

Into Clarges-street.

How fortunate!—We are likewise going into Piccadilly. I have sent in search of a coach, but fear my friend cannot find one.

A coach now drew up. A man loudly called out, a coach for Mr. and Mrs. Wand.

How fortunate! (cried the hero).—Now, ladies, we can have the pleasure of accommodating you.—

We cannot go without Mr. Harris; I thank you, sir (said the companion of Ellen).—

Pray, ladies, get into the coach, and I will watch for Mr. Harris.—

But you do not know him, sir!—

I beg your pardon, madam. If it is Mr. Harris of Clarges-street, I know him

him perfectly; I have frequently met him at my friend Stanley's \*.—

Well, sir (said Mrs. Harris) if you will be so kind as to watch for my husband, we will accept your offer; for I fear he has not been able to procure a coach.

The lady was lifted into the coach; Ellen reluctantly followed; and Mrs. Harris entered last, giving strict orders to the coachman, not to stir without that gentleman, who was gone in pursuit of her husband.

The door was put to. I took a survey of the carriage. To my great surprise, I found it was not a figured coach, and of the driver too I had some suspicions; for I thought I could discover the form of Oskam.

\* This is a family, I have since learned, where the Harris's frequently visit.

Every danger I had before imagined was now confirmed. I feared returning in search of Severn, lest I should lose sight of Ellen.

While I paused irresolute, the well-disciplined waiter appeared.

Dear ladies, how very unfortunate!

—I can see nothing of Mr. Harris.

Coachman, you must wait a little longer.

I suppose (said he) I am to wait all night at this rate.—I could have had twenty better fares since I have been waiting here.—

Well, well, good man, don't grumble;—we will make you amends.—

Amends!—yes; so I suppose you will.—If my horses die with the cold, will you pay for them?—

Then drive a little out of this draught of air.—

Do

Do not stir (cried Ellen) without Mr. Harris.

Her cries were fruitless. The supposed brother jumped into the coach, and was off in a moment.

There was for me but one alternative, which was, through the darkness of the night, to conceal myself behind the carriage. This I happily effected. He drove through many private streets, and at last stopped at the end of Oxford-road. I sprang from my hiding-place, and took my stand on the pavement. The watchmen were coming up, crying the hour of twelve. The supposed brother got out, rung the bell furiously, and a mean-looking woman came to the door. The lady, with well-affecting weakness, was supported from the coach.

Ellen looked out, and exclaimed,

M 2

Good



Good God! this is not Clarges-street!

This is our house, ladies: do alight and take some refreshment.

We do not choose any, sir.

Have the goodness to order the coachman to my house (said Mrs. Harris).

Coachman, you must drive to Clarges-street.

I was hired to come here (said he):—my horses are quite knocked up, and I will go no farther.

Then we must walk (said Mrs. Harris).—My dear girl, keep up your spirits: we shall get home very well.

Oh I never think of walking, ladies. Only come in doors, while I procure another coach.

There was no alternative; and they reluctantly alighted.

Do come in, ladies.

Not

Not for worlds (said I, advancing).

—Mrs. Harris, Miss Rutland, do not enter that house:—Sir John Bateman is its master.

Oskam, whom it really was, sprung from the box; and seizing Ellen, endeavoured by violence to force her into the house. Mrs. Harris screamed without ceasing; while I seized the villain by the collar, and obliged him to relinquish his prey. A violent scuffle ensued, in which Oskam was seconded by his companions in guilt. Their wretched female associate threw off the assumed garb of innocence, and the semblance of illness, while she loudly seconded, by repeated plaudits, the brutality of her companions.

The screams of Mrs. Harris brought the officers of the night to our assistance, while the distressed Ellen had sunk

M 3 *about an hour* lifeless

lifeless on the damp step of an adjoining house. On the approach of the watch, the lady and her feigned brother entered the house, and hastily closed the door. Oskam, resolute in villany, eluded my grasp, snatched a pistol from the boot of the carriage, which he aimed at my head: fortunately, it missed fire; and in consequence of the attempt, he was seized and conveyed to the watch-house.

Being thus happily freed from this troublesome company, I had now leisure to reward those who had so seasonably come to my assistance. Miss Rutland still continued insensible, and her companion was almost in a similar state.

I raised Ellen from the ground; I supported her in my arms; I pressed her to my heart. Trembling for her health,

health, I in vain attempted to recover her. Sweet sufferer! she was alike insensible to my fears or my caresses. One of the constables, who had witnessed the latter part of the fray, informed me, that the house we had been brought to, was notorious for infamy. He humanely went in pursuit of a coach, which he fortunately procured; but it was not without extreme difficulty that I could prevail on Mrs. Harris to enter it. She insisted on watching her young friend till she was able to walk.

At length, after my repeated persuasions, she reluctantly consented; giving herself the directions to the coachman, and looking out at the window, to prevent being deceived; while Ellen, my charming Ellen, only answered my ardent enquiries by inarti-



culate motions of grief and surprise. I supported her on her seat; my arm encircled her dear waist: her languid head sank on my shoulder and, in that endearing attitude, we reached a small house in Clarges-street. Mrs. Harris had not spoke during our ride. The coach stopped.

You see, my dear madam (said I) I have not deceived you.

I thank you, sir, for your kindness, and entreat your pardon for my suspicions.

At this moment, Lord Severn and Mr. Harris came to the door. Mutual congratulations passed, and my sweet charge gradually recovered from her stupor.

No pen can do justice to her looks, when she discovered, in her protector, your happy Merioneth. The tears of  
gratitude

gratitude rolled down her pallid cheek, while she faintly thanked me for all my kindness.

Mrs. Harris, even attentive to her friend, hurried her to her apartment.

I was too much interested for her health, to attempt detaining her. Mr.

Harris ordered refreshment, to which we made no objection; and as the

ladies were retired, the hospitable man circulated the glass with frequent bum-

pers to my charming Ellen. Severn had informed him who I was,—and to

my name, character, and connections, I found him no stranger.

But I am prevented from concluding, and shall reserve the remainder of this adventure for my next.

Yours,

MERIONETH.

LET-

ment, where some of the trial sisterhood  
were taking tea.

"The freedom of my manners (for I  
was really immoderate) was too welcome

LETTER XXV.  
I took tea with them, and  
it cleared my head.

*Lord Merioneth to Mr. Clifford.*

Nov. 18.

I NOW proceed to continue my  
story. I at length requested Severn to  
explain how he came by the informa-  
tion which had been productive of  
such fortunate events.

"You know (said he) the exploit you  
left me engaged in. On entering the  
gallery, I was brushed by Oskam. He  
did not recollect me, though I knew  
him instantly. To attempt seeing that  
lady, was in vain; so my gentleman-  
usher conducted me to another apart-  
ment,

ment, where some of the frail sisterhood were taking tea.—

“The freedom of my manners (for I was really inebriate) was too welcome to these wretched victims of mistaken pleasure. I took tea with them, and it cleared my head.—

“The girls, all but one, were engaged to a concert; and she had been rallied unceasingly during tea, on the desertion of a favourite swain. Sullen and malignant, she answered with severity.—

“Come, come (said one of them)—do, pr’ythee, Bell, get out of these stupid airs; and despise a fellow that can desert you, for a chit, scarce out of her leading-strings.—

“Away with your trifling! (said she) I am not in a humour for it.—

“Nor for any thing but Olkam, retorted the other.—

“I was



“I was before planning my escape; but this last sentence fixed me to my seat—

“They left us; and, by bribery and persuasions, I learned, that the person I was then with, had long been the favourite of Oskam; that he had been used to make frequent excursions to see her; and that, through his liberality, she had been excused from receiving the visits of other gentlemen; that, during the last two months, he had been in pursuit of a lady that had escaped from his master.—

“Has he gained that lady? said I.—

“Not yet (said she); but, I believe, to-night will accomplish it. In his frequent excursions (continued my narrator) in pursuit of this lady, he met with a girl who had occupied one of the

the lowest stations at an inn. The beauty of her person captivated him, and her art secured him. She has been for some time placed here, and he pays her all possible attention.—

“But what do you know of the other lady?” said I, impatiently.—

“One of the girls (she replied) who is in the confidence of his fair one, has informed me, that he first discovered her in a linen-draper’s shop, where he took Miss Lucy to buy a gown:—that he escaped the lady’s observation, took Lucy out of the shop, and directed her not to lose sight of that lady till she discovered her home, and then to take coach and return here to him. She obeyed his orders; followed her to her home, which was not far distant,—and returned to her employer. Oskam, indefatigable in intrigue, took  
a lodging

a lodging in the neighbourhood, and got acquainted with the servant.—He pretended to be a young man from the country, in want of a place. By artifice and professions of regard, he drew from her all the movements of the family, and laid his plans accordingly:—from her he learned that the family are to be this evening in the pit at Drury-lane. I know not the depth of their plans; but Oskam and Lucy are gone, accompanied by some of the waiters (if possible) to intercept the lady on her return home.—

“Heavens avert the intention!” said I; and, giving a trifling recompence, I hurried to the theatre.—

“You know what followed. I could give no account of their schemes; therefore requested you only to observe them. After losing you, I had

the

the pleasure to meet with this gentleman, who was in search of his friends. I recollected him. We came here, in hopes they were come home; and on being disappointed, were preparing to return again in search of them, when you fortunately arrived. And now we may mutually congratulate each other on the success of an exploit which appeared to be so replete with mystery. I must not forget to add, that Mr. Harris was very doubtful of my veracity; and I believe, would not have suffered me to return with him, had not major B\*\*\*\* come by, who is well known to him, and identified my person, and vouched for my honour."

From Mr. Harris, who was now become talkative, I learned the happiness which awaits you with my cousin Laura; and, to my great joy too,



discovered that charming woman to have been the protectress of my Ellen.

Dear Laura! I shall love thee for ever, for thus providing a safe and honourable asylum for your wandering friend. I can now trace the hand which told me, Ellen was safe and well. For your kindness to my friend, accept my warmest acknowledgments.

Hasten to town, and fetch your charming Laura. I shall want such assistance as your's to induce my Ellen to consent to a private marriage. I can never suffer her again to subject herself to such dangers as those she has just escaped. My income must support us:—love will teach us economy;—in time, the earl will certainly relent; and I shall be the happiest of mankind.

I have

I have only to say, that at four o'clock we left the hospitable Mr. Harris, who promised me a reception this evening to tea. It is near noon; and I have not yet received the benediction of Morpheus. I must rest a few hours; and then for love and Ellen.

Your's, your friend and brother,

MERTONETH.

P.S. We have discovered, through an indirect channel, that Bateman is in London. I am too happy in the smiles of Ellen, wantonly to throw away a life she values; but, if I meet him by chance, he must atone for his baseness. After coolly viewing the late fortunate event, I am inclined, as indeed is Severn, to think they hastily arranged their plan, favoured by the

wetness of the night; and, had we not so providentially discovered them, there is no doubt of the success of their undertaking. My Ellen would now have been in the power of Bateman, who would perhaps have compelled her to become his wife, to secure herself from farther violence. Oh, Clifford! she shall never more wander from the sight of Albert.

I know not by what means I have been so fortunate as to have discovered my plans, and in the very moment of victory bore away the prize. I have been some hours in confinement, for finding a pistol at him, but I suppose he was too happy to appear against me; so I am again at liberty: but this may not always be the case: and, as I have besides transgressed in some rising points of law, I mean to quit England immediately.

LET-

Not

N 2

## LETTER XXVI.

*Osram to Sir John Bateman.*

London, Nov. 20, 179—.

MY schemes are again defeated: I know not by what means; but Lord Merioneth (curse on my ill fortune!) discovered my plans,—and, in the very moment of victory, bore away the prize. I have been some hours in confinement, for firing a pistol at him: but I suppose he was too happy, to appear against me; so I am again at liberty; but this may not always be the case: and, as I have besides transgressed in some trifling points of law, I mean to quit England immediately.



Not knowing that I can be any way  
serviceable to your honour, I humbly  
take my leave; and have only to request  
that you will pay the Bearer of this, the  
balance which is between us. I re-  
main

Your devoted

OSKAM.

LET

Not knowing that I can be any way  
serviceable to your honour, I humbly  
take my leave, and have only to repeat

# LETTER XXVII.

Balance which is between me and

*Lady Laura Mericneth to Miss Lumley.*

London, Nov. 30, 179—.

WHY, Jane, what can you possibly  
be doing in the country at this dreary  
season? For Heaven's sake, do make  
your escape by some means or other,  
for fear you should hereafter fancy  
yourself one of the natural appendages  
of that old mansion of your's, and inca-  
pable of being removed. But as you  
have condescended to promise your at-  
tendance at a certain event, I will (at  
your request) write on till that expect-  
ed period. Indeed, Jane, I am a sad

N 3

narrator,

narrator, when there is so much to be said of self.

In my last, I think I informed you, that Clifford was gone, for a few days, into Kent, and that I expected his return, to escort me to London. He came, and brought me the welcome account of Merioneth's fortunate discovery of Ellen, of which I shall reserve the particulars till we meet.

By degrees, we informed Mrs. Merioneth of all Miss Rutland's persecutions since her departure from the Priory. She was a little offended that I had been so long silent on the subject; but I soon appeased her, by pleading my promise to my friend. Having thus done away every suspicion which before had clouded the character of Ellen, I had the satisfaction to perceive, that my aunt was not a little interested for her future happiness.

Not

Not to be tediously prolix, you may imagine us arrived in London, and settled in an elegant house, in St. James's square.

Immediately after breakfast, the day succeeding our arrival, I went, attended by Clifford, to the house of Mr. Harris. We here found Lord Merioneth, as usual, fighting to his fair Ellen. Nothing could exceed our mutual pleasure at this happy rencontre, and Albert endeavoured to turn it to his own advantage, by entreating Ellen to leave the point on which they were before disputing entirely to my arbitration.

This point, you may suppose, was a private marriage.

You must pardon me, my lord (said the little hussy), for declining the interference of Lady Laura, and (ad-

N<sup>o</sup> 4 dressing



dressing me) highly as I value your ladyship's friendship, and much as I am indebted to your kindness, I cannot think you in this cause a proper arbitress.—

And why not, my cautious Ellen? (said I, laughing).—

Because (said she, as you have, with so much greatness of mind, despised the allurements of grandeur, you will doubtless, recommend to Lord Merioneth a similar contempt of them.—

Certainly (said I) I shall, and call you an arrant little prude into the bargain, if you do not confess yourself infinitely indebted to my *very proper* example.—

Clifford was applied to: he seriously declined giving any opinion. Albert renewed his importunities; but Ellen would assent to no proposals made

made without the sanction of his family.

My obligations (said she) to Lady Derwent, are not lessened by those circumstances which have deprived me of her protection; and shall I, after being unfortunately the cause of separating the affections of her family by one hasty, one unsanctioned deed, be the despised barrier to their future union? No, my lord, think better of me; and know that I will not deserve misery, though I may be destined to support it.

Ah, Jane! I could say nothing to sentiments like these; they would have suited admirably your moralising ladyship: as for us, earthly beings, we found the subject rather painful, and dismissed it as fast as possible.

The

The sweet girl entreated me to stay the day with her. This I could not do; but promised to return in the evening. Clifford and Merioneth took a family dinner with us, in St. James's square. Severn came in time for tea. We afterwards adjourned to Clarges street, and passed one of the happiest evenings I ever experienced. No cards,—no *ennui*,—no scandal:—it was, my friend,

The feast of reason, and the flow of soul.

Clifford! Ah! you can form no idea of him. Stay, let me assist your imagination. He is, my Jane, at once the scholar, the lover, and the gentleman. All softness when he addresses me: all attention when he asks an opinion; yet too sincere to acquiesce in an error, even in his mistress. He instructs without offending, and im-

proves

proves when he appears only endeavouring to please!

At a late hour our party separated; but not before I had engaged Ellen, by my aunt's request, to spend the next day in St. James's square.

During the evening, I learned that Lord Severn had proposed going himself to the Priory, to bring about, if possible, a reconciliation;—that he intended making proposals for Julia; and, should they be accepted, to resign her fortune in favour of Ellen.

Merioneth rather proudly declined his friend's proposals, by saying, he should not choose to deprive his sister of her fortune.

Merioneth (replied Severn) I am seriously offended at your unnecessary punctilios.—Is not my estate descended from Miss Rutland's father? And has she



the not a right to expect a compensation? If the earl agrees to my proposals, why not receive it from your sister's hands, who will, I am sure, rejoice in the power of contributing to your happiness? Should I unfortunately receive a denial, I must still consider myself my cousin's debtor, and devise some other means of payment.—

Enough (cried Albert, extending his hand to his friend);—I will submit to your direction. What says my Ellen?—

That I will cheerfully accede to any measure likely to ensure the approbation of your lordship's family.—

A thousand thanks, my dearest Ellen, for this generous confession. On this point then I rest my hopes (turning to Severn) and will endeavour to  
await

await patiently the result of your journey.—

Lord Severn received the praises of our little party, for his considerate conduct, while the pensive Ellen only blushed her thanks. To-morrow, I fetch her home. I am more than ever interested in her happiness. Adieu.

Your's,

LAURA MERIONETH.

L E T

## LETTER XXVIII.

*Lady Laura Mertoneth to Miss Lumley.*

WELL, Jane, prepare for more wonder. Fortune is determined not to do her work by halves. It is true the jade has tormented us a little, but she seems now about to make ample compensation. But how? methinks you say—Has my lord relented? No, no; but yet we do not despair of him: for we have gained such an auxiliary as even lord Derwent himself cannot withstand. What say you to sir Felix Rutland\*? Amazing! you cry. Why,

\* Or, in other words, Ellen's grandfather, who has lately succeeded to the title of a baronet, which event was announced in the Gazette a few weeks ago.

so it is, but no less true for being strange.

In my last, I think, I informed you, that Ellen was to spend the ensuing day with me: she did so, and my aunt politely requested her, to make her home in St. James's square. To this she agreed; after some little hesitation.

Severn departed for the Priory, well laden with letters and commissions. The attention of our beauts, left us but little leisure to reflect on the absence of Severn. Lord Merioneth indeed was sometimes inclined to be a little impatient; but Mrs. Merioneth undertook to keep him in proper order. Sometimes she would check his hopes by fears, and then again disperse his fears with hopes. Well, I laughed, Ellen smiled, Clifford looked mildly happy, and



and Mortimer as well as could be expected on my side, I believe, but I believed me.

So, passed many days, without any news from the Priory. — Recollecting one morning that I had a trifling commission for a jeweller, I took the Chariot, and, accompanied by my friend, set out for the city. While we were in the shop, an elderly gentleman entered, supported by a servant.

Will you permit me, sir (said he, addressing the jeweller) to sit down a few moments? —

A chair was brought, and he was seated in it, apparently in pain.

Are you not well, sir? — said Ellen, in the softest and most plaintive note you can possibly conceive.

Not very well, young lady (said he). My carriage has been overturned at the corner of this street; and the shock

I received in falling, has rather deranged me; but I believe, I am not materially injured.—

I hope not,—said Ellen.

He eyed her with curiosity.

The servant returned, bringing word that the carriage was too much injured to be used, without going to the coach-maker's.

Well (replied he), get me a coach; but be very particular what sort of one you bring, for I am fearful of being exposed to another fall.—

If you are going to the west end of the town, sir (said I) perhaps we can set you down.—

I cannot think of being so troubled, some, madam; besides, it may be out of your way. My residence is Pall-mall.—

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Not

Not on the least, sir. We are going into St. James's square.

Then I will thankfully, if your lady, accept your offer.

He purchased a few trinkets, which he entreated our acceptance of, as a tribute of gratitude for our attention to an old man.

Conditionally (said I) that you inform us, whom we are to thank for them.

Provided (said he) that you promise on your part, that no wild spark of a lover shall call me to account for my temerity, I will.

Agreed, said I.

And you, young lady: (turning to Ellen) will you make the same engagement?

Yes, indeed, sir, — smiling pensively

Why

Why then, ladies, the person thus honoured in addressing you, is called Sir Felix Rutland.

I bowed, and took the trinkets. Ellen did the same, but in visible agitation.

Sir Felix was lifted into the carriage, and I had only time to bid Ellen rally her spirits, and make the most of this unexpected event. It was not in her power; surprise had overpowered her faculties, and she sat silently beside him. Sir Felix appeared struggling with pain, and, often looking in her pallid face, seemed eagerly endeavouring to read her very soul. At length addressing himself to me, he requested permission to pay me, at some future period, his thanks for my kindness.

Sir Felix Rutland (said I) will always be a welcome visitor at Mrs. Men-



tioneth's.—At the same time I gave him a card.

He read it, and exclaimed—Is it possible that I have the honour of addressing Lady Laura Merioneth?—Ah! my dear young lady, to one branch of your family I am under innumerable obligations.—

If you think so, Sir Felix, suppose me the representative of my family, and repay the obligations by dining to-morrow in James's-square.

If I am able (he replied) I will avail myself of so agreeable an invitation; but, may I ask, is this young lady your sister.—

No, Sir Felix, only a friend, from the country.

He sighed; and, I believe complained of external infirmity, the better to disguise his mental misery.

The carriage soon after stopped, and he was conveyed into the house.

Ellen, relieved by his departure, gave vent to her feelings by an agony of tears.

Fortunately, on our arrival at home, Mrs. Merioneth was alone.—To her I related the occurrences of the morning.

She encouraged us to hope every thing from such favourable circumstances; for doubtless, he alluded to Ellen, when he named his obligations to my family.

In the evening our beaux attended to conduct us to the play, but on hearing the events of the morning, it was postponed; fearing that, as it was tragedy at both houses, the spirits of Miss Rutland would be too much hurried. Instead, we made up a small concert; and never did I hear such soul-breath-

ing strains, as those which fell from the lips of Ellen.—How powerfully does restraint act on the human mind!—At the Priory, I have often heard her tremulous notes, but knew not half the excellence of her voice; for it was generally in large parties, where she was swayed by the over-bearing consequence of Lord Derwent; but here gratitude conquered timidity, and she gave her powers all their compass.

The delighted Albert flew to her, as she arose from the harpsichord, and led her in triumph to a seat, while she modestly shrunk from the praises we bestowed on her. It was late before we separated, and engaged our gentlemen to be with us the next day at dinner.

YOU must excuse frequent interruptions in my narrative, for I can scarcely write a dozen lines together.

Having brought you to the conclusion of the day on which we first met Sir Felix, I must now inform you, that on Mrs. Merioneth repeating my invitation, we received for answer, that he would certainly wait on us. — Scarcely had we congratulated each other on his ready acquiescence, when Merioneth unexpectedly made his appearance. — He came with a packet just arrived from Devonshire. Literally to transcribe it, would take more time than I have to spare; therefore, take the heads.

Lady Derwent wrote to Mrs. Merioneth,



rioneth to Ellen, and to Albert:—To  
 Mrs. Merioneth she acknowledged her-  
 self greatly indebted for her considera-  
 tion in taking Ellen under her protec-  
 tion.—She adds:—Dear as Ellen is,  
 dear as she ever will be to my heart,  
 I cannot consent to her marriage with  
 Albert (by this we learned that Al-  
 bert had applied for her consent)—nor  
 can I forget that I am the wife of Lord  
 Derwent, and the mother of his son;  
 and that to this son he fondly looks up,  
 as the support of his declining years,  
 and the perpetuator of his name.—Can  
 I, then, my dear sister, by granting a  
 separate consent, raise the barrier of  
 disobedience between my husband and  
 my son?

To Albert, in maternal solicitude,  
 she commands and entreats by turns;  
 tells him to go again to the continent;

and to trust to her endeavours for accomplishing the object he is interested in; but, as he values her peace, to go no farther in the affair of marriage without his father's approbation.

To Ellen, her ladyship condescends to apologise for the part she took in the affair with Sir John. Marrying you to advantage (she says) was an object near my heart; made so by my affection for you; but when the immediate well-being of my son became so obviously connected with your affairs, can you wonder that I exerted all my powers to fix your choice, and accelerate your marriage; well knowing, when you became the wife of another, that your principles would make you just to your husband, and, I hoped, indifferent to Lord Merioneth. As a friend, you may condemn the severity  
of

of my conduct: but, as a mother, your own good sense will find sufficient extenuation for it. To your own heart, Ellen, I appeal.—Can I encourage my son in disobedience to his father?—Time and patience may do much; in the mean time, exert your influence with Merioneth, to submit, without repining, to the will of the earl.—A twelvemonth spent on the continent, may awaken new ideas; and (start not, Ellen, at the supposition) it may even weaken his attachment to you.—At all events, if you value my peace, entertain no thoughts, at present, of an union with Merioneth. Should any future period of time, or any unforeseen event, occasion Lord Derwent to consent to this alliance, you may rest assured, that you have in me a friend, anxious for your welfare, and one that  
will

will neglect no opportunity of promoting your happiness. In the mean time, I am sorry to be the messenger of ill news; but the earl, infligated by some recent occurrences, has taken from your small fortune, the full expences of your education; of course, there remains but a very trifle for your subsistence.—But if you will oblige me, by accepting of an apartment at the house of Mrs. Jarvis, a friend of mine, at Chelsea, I will take upon me to satisfy all pecuniary demands. Our steward is empowered to enter fully into this subject with you; he is likewise charged with the care of your clothes and jewels.

Julia's letter to Ellen was long and affectionate. She pathetically laments the obduracy of the earl; but speaks in high terms of the affection her mother

ther



ther entertains for Ellen : seems to think her present situation only temporary, and therefore urges her acceptance of Lady Derwent's offer. She adds, the earl is greatly exasperated at Clifford's ingratitude, and her cousin Laura's choice. This was a subject Mrs. Merioneth was obliged to write to him on ; but he has not condescended to answer her letter.

Well Jane, what think you now of this noble peer?—How I despise his meanness !—What pitiful vengeance has he taken !—He could not, with all his artifice, dispose of Ellen's person as some equivalent for the disappointment, he has deprived her of her fortune. Thank heaven ! she is superior to the loss of it, and happily beyond the reach of his favours or his frowns. For myself, I am totally in-

different

different to his sentiments on my conduct:—he can lay no embargo on my fortune:—I with poor Merioneth could say the same.

To Merioneth, Severn wrote as follows:—That on his arrival at the Priory, he was received with all possible respect by every branch of the family; that he found the earl confined with the gout, and the countess greatly indisposed through fatigue and anxiety, and Julia, the dear Julia, quite *penférofa*;—that having first given ease to the perturbed spirits of the ladies, and opened in part his commission, he was conducted to the apartment of the peer;—that, after delivering the letters he was charged with, and giving evidence of the safety and innocence of Ellen, he proceeded to business.

His

His own offers were politely accepted; but when he ventured to name the shapes of Merioneth, his Lordship's politeness vanished into air. When Severn proposed, as Mrs Rutland's relative, to drop Julia's fortune in favour of Merioneth, the earl replied—

Aye; you talk like a young man; a very young man indeed! but, from the alliance we have just agreed to, your interest becomes mine.—I cannot, therefore, consent to your childish generosity, nor be so blind as to be bribed with my own money. There is my niece, too acting another pretty farce,—going to marry a fellow for love, that can settle nothing on her but pompous phrases and disinterested professions,—a fellow that had not the spirit to pursue Fortune when she ab-

solutely

salutely invited him. No, no, my lord; if Merioneth ever expects to be restored to my favour, he must quit England for a twelvemonth, and Miss Rutland for ever.—

I was (says Severn) preparing to interrupt him; which his lordship observing, cried—Do not interrupt me; but hear what I have to say!—From the first moment of my acquaintance with you, I determined never to make you a party in this troublesome business; for I judged, from what I could see of your disposition, that, if you once knew your affinity to Miss Rutland, you would enter with avidity into her concerns, and perhaps discover some of my ablest plans. To prevent this, I commanded my family to be silent on the subject; and I thought Ellen would never gain sufficient courage



rage to be herself the relator; but this precaution various circumstances rendered abortive. As for Mr Felix Rutland, he, in her infant state, rebuked her,—gave her up to the care and compassion of strangers; nor has he ever made a single enquiry after her; on the contrary, he has named his heir, and, I am told, actually resides with him. And now, my lord (said he, with firmness) weighing all these circumstances, let this subject never come again between us!—Perhaps you may wish to entertain the ladies; and I wish to be alone. To-morrow morning I shall expect you again.

Returning to the parlour, I found Julia alone. She listened to my love,—she accepted of my heart,—she even promised me an early day for our

union; but yet it was an evening of regret, for we could not lose sight of your disappointment.

I must not omit informing you, though you already know it in part, that Sir John followed Oskam to London, the better to secure Miss Rutland; that our happy recovery of her, by frustrating their plans, threw Oskam into some embarrassments, so that he did not venture to appear before his exasperated master, after the ruin of his last scheme; that he wrote to him, stating that he was going abroad, and requested that a balance due to him might be paid into the hands of a person by whom he sent the letter. Sir John refused payment, asserting that Oskam was in his debt. Oskam, rendered desperate by necessity, ventured on a scheme, few others would

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have

have thought practicable. Instead of going to America, he went post to Sir John's house in Cornwall, and informed the steward that Sir John was going to continue the winter in London; that a house was taken, and servants hired; that, having been hard run for cash, he had overdrawn his banker, and, to make up the deficiency, must have all the money out of his hands. The steward, knowing Oskam stood so high in the confidence of his master, made no hesitation in complying, and gave him cash to a considerable amount; with which, and his master's wardrobe, a little plate, and a few valuables of light carriage, he actually decamped, and has not since been heard of. A few days afterwards, Sir John himself arrived in Cornwall. The steward, having no  
idea

idea of the imposition, hoped his honour had received the cash in time. This brought on an explanation, which had very nearly been fatal to the poor old man, whom his impatient master hurled from the first stair-case into the hall. Forgetful of the licence he had given this villanous promoter of his guilty pleasures to molest the tranquillity and disturb the repose of others, he became outrageous when he found himself the dupe of that artifice he had so often applauded, when practised on others. It is said, he is gone to Italy. These circumstances have transpired from the family at Mablemound.

Severn apologises for his absence, and desires our gentlemen to make use of his house, which he shall not

on giving B 2 return



return to, till the arrival of Lady Se-  
vern.

It is impossible to describe to you the damp these letters threw over our late cheerful party. The earl's absolute refusal of his son's request, on the one hand,—and the information that Sir Felix had adopted an heir, on the other,—together with the loss of her small patrimony, to which, in the worst of times, she looked for support in retirement,—made me tremble for the spirits of my friend. To my great surprise, she supported the shock with wonderful fortitude.

Mercy on me! that there should be all this bustle about permitting a woman to bear the name of Merioneth, who would honour, by her alliance, the first potentate on earth!

Ellen, with great firmness, entreat-

cd

ed the exasperated Merioneth to obey the wishes of his friends, by departing for the continent.

Never, never, Ellen, will I leave you unprotected, to the mercy of my unfeeling father. — Be mine, my love. Condescend to be the partner of my flight; and to-morrow's sun, if you so will it, shall witness our departure. In your society, all climes would be alike agreeable. You would compensate for a host of friends. —

Merioneth (said he) could I surmount every other objection to our marriage, Lady Derwent's appeal to my generosity would prohibit my consent. —

Distraction! (cried he, walking wildly about the room) Are you too an accomplice in my misery?

I endeavoured to inspire hope; but

my voice was not heard.—Merioneth advanced.

Ellen (said he, kneeling before her, while he stared wildly on her pallid face) I have loved you long and fervently. Do not hastily decide on a point of so much importance. This appeal to your principles is a conspiracy against my peace. Be mine: only be mine, and leave the rest to Fortune. You can no longer plead obligations to my family:—they have basely repaid themselves.—

It is true, my lord (said she) that I am happily relieved from a weight of obligations, which have long oppressed me. I rejoice that Lord Derwent has repaid himself; for we can ill support the recollection of favours from those we find it impossible to esteem. The earl, it is true, has freed me from obligations;

ligations; but he has not taken from me my sense of right: and, believe me, no mean system of revenge shall induce me to enter a family which has so unequivocally rejected me.—

Oh! hold, for pity's sake! (cried he) nor irrevocably resolve on a point which would annihilate the peace of Merioneth! Will you, who ought to despise, second the avaricious views of my father, and be the willing abettor of his unfeeling plans? Ellen, you have deceived yourself or me. If you really loved me, could you thus calmly desire my departure? No, lovely, but mistaken woman, my affections, my distresses, have excited your compassion, but not called forth your love.—

This is too much, Lord Merioneth (replied my friend). I expected, from your candour, a very different con-



struction of that conduct which the peculiar severity of my situation has obliged me to adopt. For your sake, I would have waved punctilios: I would have been your's, with the bare consent of your family, in hopes, that time and my unabating assiduity, would have gained their approbation. These hopes are past; for the earl has declared, that nothing but your absolute renunciation of me for ever, can restore you to his favour. Consider the force of this expression; reflect on the consequences of a premature marriage, and acquit me of unkindness, when I assert, that I never will enter a family which threatens to make the price of my alliance, the disgrace at least, if not the ruin, of my husband.

He was appeased: he kissed her

passive

passive hands, but looked the very image of despair.

This sudden change in his appearance alarmed us both, more than the most violent invective. The long-suppressed tears rolled down the pallid cheeks of my friend, while she called him her dear Albert, and intreated him to rise. The sound of her sweet voice, so plaintively addressed to him, recalled his recollection.

Am I, indeed, dear to you? And yet you condemn me to misery!—

At the moment of his saying this, the door opened, and Sir Felix stood before us, accompanied by my aunt.—Albert arose. Sir Felix advanced to him.

Young gentleman, from circumstances which this good lady (turning to my aunt) has kindly explained to me,

hence, I must inform you, that I am particularly interested in the concerns of this lady.—

Ellen arose; but, so great was her agitation, that it was with difficulty she stood. Sir Felix took her trembling hand: he bid her be tranquil.

You fear (said he) a renewal of that severity which was so fatal to your unfortunate mother.—Ah! so she looked—so she trembled, when she intreated me to admit the visits of her lover.

Ill-fated Ellen! I rejected your petition, and disowned your offspring!

He paused for a moment. My friend sank on her knees before him.

This is too much (said he); then, I turning to my aunt, intreated her to excuse him from that day's appointment, and made a hurrying motion to be gone:

gone, which Ellen perceiving, cried  
—Will you not speak? Will you not  
bless your child?

Merioneth, placing himself beside  
her, supported her in her arms.

Child! (said he, with severity) have  
you not been taught to execrate the  
author of your mother's woes?—

Never (said she, with fervor) has  
Ellen breathed a wish discordant to  
your peace, or dared repine at any  
thing but the deprivations of your af-  
fections.—

Dear semblance of my murdered  
Ellen! (stooping to embrace her, while  
Merioneth, observing his agitation,  
raised her from the ground) what a  
wretch do I appear! (said Sir Felix,  
holding her to his heart).—Why did I  
not succour thy infancy, and protect  
thy early youth? Ah! why leave you  
to



to eat the bitter bread of mean dependence.

He paused. The recollection of past events seemed to crowd upon his memory. He sank on a chair, and sobbed in agony, while the tears of remorse rolled down his furrowed cheek. Ellen knelt at his feet, and intreated him to be composed.

Rise! (said he, in a hurrying accent) I will not be reproached.—Begone! Begone! and see my face no more.

Alarmed for the spirits of my friend, with the assistance of Merioneth, I conveyed her to another apartment; then left him to tranquillise her spirits; and returning to the parlour, found Sir Felix more calm; and, at the earnest request of my aunt, he took a cordial, which greatly relieved his spirits. I then, as desired by Merioneth, presented

presented to my aunt the letters which had arrived from the Priory. She was a stranger to their contents, having been engaged with company during our perusal of them, and I had to apologise for having inadvertently broken the seal of that which belonged to her. —She ran them over, and presented them to Sir Felix.

These letters (said she) will explain to you, Sir Felix, the exact situation of my young friends. If you will excuse us, we will leave you to peruse them.

He declined the offer, but requested leave to take them home—desired Merioneth to call on him in the evening, accompanied by my aunt, when they must endeavour to form some plan likely to work upon the disposition of the earl. My aunt promised to bring Lord Merioneth at the appointed hour,

hour, which was eight o'clock; and Sir Felix politely took his leave.

I went again to Ellen. She was greatly indisposed. We sent for an apothecary, who recommended the loss of a little blood, and a few hours repose. To this proposal she willingly consented. I saw her to bed; and, returning to the dining-parlour, found Clifford arrived, and the dinner waiting for me.

After the cloth was removed, we called on Mrs. Merioneth to account for the sudden appearance of Sir Felix.

He came (said my aunt) before Mrs. Manners had left me, and made an apology for his early appearance.

When we were alone, after some previous conversation concerning his yesterday's accident, he asked me, if I

would

would have the goodness to inform him, who that young lady was, who accompanied my niece.

Sir Felix (said I) she is the offspring of an unfortunate attachment, brought up by a woman of fashion; but some unavoidable occurrences have obliged her to renounce the protection of her early friend. — At the earnest desire of my niece, who has rendered her some services, and is particularly attached to her, I received her here; and I must acknowledge, that the goodness of her heart, and the propriety of her conduct, have rendered her almost as dear to me as Laura herself.

Madam (said he, with earnestness) will you favour me with the name of the person who so long protected this young lady? —

Mrs. —  
blow



"Mrs. Merioneth," (replied my aunt) —  
Now, Lady Derwent, it is enough! (cried he) — I am satisfied. — Then with great emotion continued — It is hard, madam, to acknowledge errors, or condemn ourselves. — I had once a daughter, endowed with every grace, rich in every virtue, she was the consolation of my life, and the hope of my declining years. — In an ill-fated hour, I commanded her to resign a favoured lover, and receive a husband of my choice. But, perhaps, madam, you know the tale, and I need not repeat my own unfeeling conduct. — Mrs. Merioneth flew to the assistance of her suffering friend, watched her dissolution, and, I have been informed, has since taken charge of the child. The extreme resemblance this young lady

lady bears to my unfortunate daughter, together with the circumstances you have related, induce me to hope, that chance has thrown in my way a jewel, which shame and pride have hitherto prevented my seeking.

AND will you receive her? (said my aunt) Will you at last hear the voice of nature from the lips of Ellen?

Then she is my child? Gracious Heaven, I thank thee!—But will she own for a parent, the repentant author of her mother's woes? Does she not hate my name, and despise my authority?

Indeed, Sir Felix, the heart of Miss Rutland is superior to these sentiments.

I must see her (said he) and I must, if possible, atone for my former neglect. But, recollecting himself, he begged

to be informed what had occasioned her removal from the Priory.

This led to a long train of circumstances, with which you are already acquainted; and concluded with informing him, that Lord Merioneth was even then in the house.

Let me see them!—Let me instantly see them (said he).

My aunt made no objection, but led the way to the parlour. The scene which followed, you are already acquainted with.

In the evening, my aunt and Merioneth set out for Pall-mall. Ellen was in a sweet sleep, and my ladyship and Clifford left *tertium*. And a most pleasant evening it was.

Not having had an opportunity before to speak much of my own affairs, I will now state the heads of our intended

tended arrangements. Clifford's fortune consists of a small, but well cultivated estate in Kent, on which I am informed, stands a commodious mansion.—My fortune is about thirty thousand pounds; twenty are settled on myself; the other ten, I resign to Clifford.—My aunt is to retain this house; and here we are to reside in the winter.—The Twickenham house, being in great want of repair, is to be given up; as we are to reside the next summer in Kent.

You can form no idea of Clifford's gratitude, for, what he terms, my condescension.—Ah! Jane, with what confined optics do the bulk of mankind judge of our actions!—Where can be the great merit of laying out a few thousand pounds to secure the esteem, the protection, and the affec-



tions of a deserving man!—I told Oxford, that to extol this action as a singular piece of generosity, was publishing a libel on the human race; for, surely, it is impossible to frame a flattering satire on the general selfishness of mankind. I will dismiss the subject, in the words of my favourite bard.

“So shines a good deed in a naughty world.”

It was late before my aunt and Melioneth returned from Pall-mall. I

Laura (cried she, hurrying to me) I am all hope, all love, all ecstasy!

Indeed! (said I) Well moderate your raptures, and tell us why you are all hope and ecstasy;—we know you have been all love a long while;—

Let me speak only five words to Ellen, and I will tell you any thing.

Not a syllable to night, could you even

even make me prime favourite to the  
Grand Signor.

Why then, positively, I am silent.

That must not be (said Clifford, advancing).—We presage good news from the hilarity of your appearance.

He would have proceeded; but Merioneth, hastily interrupting him, cried

—You presage right, thou prince of sages.—Know that the generosity of Sir Felix Rutland is beyond comparison. I am commissioned to lay such proposals before the earl, as even avarice itself cannot refuse.—And would not you be all hope, all ecstasy?

I am both (said Clifford, gallantly bowing to my ladyship).—Where lady Laura permits hope, ecstasy must follow.

A truce with your compliments (said I), give us particulars; and, above all,

what of the heir that the earl's letter alluded to?—

There is such a person in being as an heir (replied Memoneth) but only to a part of the estate affixed to the title;—but yet an immense fortune is at the disposal of Sir Felix.—Mr. Monson, whom you have heard of, as the destined husband of my Ellen's mother, has paid the debt of nature, leaving Sir Felix the successor to his extensive possessions.

I have not time to comment on this fortunate revolution in the affairs of my friend; be it sufficient to say, that Albert was with us the next morning to breakfast, and that Ellen, charmingly recovered, listened to his raptures with placid smiles.

After a thousand adieus, and ten thousand

thousand benedictions; he set out for the Priory.—Sir Felix dined with us; and the cheerfulness of Clifford, with the good nature of my aunt, kept up a tolerable lively conversation, and prevented either of our guests from recurring to the late agitated scene.

In the evening, Sir Felix escorted us to the theatre, where we were agreeably entertained.—Sir Felix really lives here;—he seems only to breathe in the presence of Ellen.—Clifford is hurrying the lawyers.—Ellen sighing for her mate, but in hourly expectation of his return.

Your's is this moment come to hand.—So, you cannot possibly be in London before Christmas! Not knowing how to remedy the evil, I must accept your excuses, and close this enor-



mous packet with my hearty wishes  
for your arrival; in the mean time,  
I am your's,

LETTER XXIX.  
L. M. MERRION.

Lady Laura Merriam to Miss Laura

AFTER leading you so far through  
the drama, and finding that you abso-  
lutely cannot be present at its conclu-  
sion, I am induced out of mere com-  
passion to continue my narrative.

In my last, I should have informed  
you that the earl's steward arrived  
some days ago, bringing with him  
Miss Rutland's trunks, and the lar-  
gical account of the disbursement of  
her fortune.

It is very well, Mr. Johnston (said  
my friend, with dignity) you may leave  
the

LET

mons packet with my hearty wishes  
for your arrival; in the mean time

## LETTER XXIX.

*Lady Laura Merioneth to Miss Lumby.*

AFTER leading you so far through the drama, and finding that you absolutely cannot be present at its conclusion, I am induced, out of mere compassion, to continue my narrative.

In my last, I should have informed you, that the earl's steward arrived some days ago, bringing with him Miss Rutland's movables, and the farcical account of the disbursement of her fortune.

It is very well, Mr. Johnson (said my friend, with dignity) you may leave  
the

the papers:—at some future time I will examine them.

He bowed, and departed.

He was likewise charged with a letter for my aunt, in which my folly was severely arraigned, and Clifford's conduct treated with some asperity: but this I carefully concealed from my swain, and prepared to attend my aunt and Ellen to Pall-mall, where we were engaged to dine.—Clifford attended us.

In the afternoon, Ellen presented her mother's portrait to Sir Felix, as the pledge of her affinity to him.

(There needs no farther proof, my child (said he) of your claims upon me. —Without any other circumstance, your great resemblance to your mother would have been your passport to my heart; and I have only to hope, that my attention to your future welfare, will

will obliterate the remembrance of my past unkindness.

Saying this, he kissed the portrait with affection, and returned it to Ellen.

But you have not told me (said he) if the powers with which I have entrusted Lord Merioneth, meet your approbation?

My sense of your generosity, Sir (said she) is too great for utterance; and I have only now to fear being spoiled with excess of indulgence.

I am so fully persuaded, from the whole tenour of your conduct (said he) that no indulgence can spoil you, and so well satisfied with your past behaviour, that I think no reward too great for it; and I hope that, in the disinterested affections of Lord Merioneth, you will



you will find a recompense for every  
past affliction.

At this instant the door opened,  
and Merioneth himself appeared. He  
was in a moment by the side of Ellen.

My life! my love! (cried he) will  
you not condescend to bid me  
welcome?—

Lord Merioneth (trembling, and  
extending her lily hand)—we did not  
expect your return so early.

But surely, Ellen, my expedition will  
not retard my welcome?—

Not in the least; but—

Come, come (cried Sir Felix), no  
prudery, girls—tell Merioneth, you  
are heartily glad to see him, and give  
him instantly a kiss, to reward him for  
his expedition.—

My dear sir (said she) surely Lord  
Merioneth cannot doubt of a sincere  
welcome

welcome from me, especially when I am at once so happily situated, as to obey you and gratify myself at the same time.

My generous Ellen! (said he) and do you pronounce me worthy a reward which would compensate for a thousand journeys?

She inclined her head gently towards him, while the crimson tide covered her lovely face. He delicately kissed her glowing cheek; then, springing in moment from his suppliant posture, and gently raising her from her seat, he led her towards Sir Felix.

Here, cried he, presenting her,

"Here Love's golden shafts employ—  
Here lights his lamp—here waves his purple wings."

I conjecture every thing that is agreeable,

agreeable, from the good spirits you are returned in (cried Sir Felix); but do condescend to talk a little intelligibly to a plain man!

He bowed, led Ellen again to her seat, and, to a question from Sir Felix of—How were your proposals received?—answered—

Not so well as I could wish, Sir Felix; but, if you will generously condescend to overlook some little niceties in this affair—

What are the niceties? replied Sir Felix.

The earl's refusal of appearing publicly to approve my choice, or taking any concern in the arrangements of settlements. But I trust, sir, that you and Miss Rutland will separate necessity from choice. I would have had her invited into a family which

will

will be so much honoured in her alliance.

Poor! poor! (cried Sir Felix) never mind such trifles as these:—we can settle every thing of this kind without him, provided he has recalled the embargo before laid on the union.

Entirely! replied Albert, with vivacity.

Well, well; then we won't demur about settlements and invitations.—Something must be given up to prejudice, and some allowance made for the disappointment of a favourite object, which it appears to have been to the earl, to dispose of you both in a different manner.

Impatient for particulars, I demanded what reception he met with.  
Tolerable (said he).—My mother was too happy at my arrival to dis-

guise



gulf her sentiments; and I had the satisfaction to observe that the earl but in played off the indifference he feigned. Julia, all transport, forgot every thing but Severn. They listened in silence to my tale; and, at its conclusion, my mother and sister warmly congratulated Miss Rutland on her deserved good fortune, while Severn wildly declared he was never so happy in his life.—

And now, my lord (said he) what say you to my cousin for a daughter?—

By Sir Felix acknowledging her, every objection is removed, said my mother.

Rather (cried Julia) my dear madam, say there never existed cause for an objection.—

And so (replied the earl, with assumed severity) my reason is to be overwhelmed.

whelmed with a tale of wonder; and, while I am lost in astonishment, you would endeavour to gain an extorted consent.

I perceived that hesitation would add to his advantage over me; and therefore answered with firmness—

By no means, my lord. I submit the case to your candour, and shall to-morrow expect the result of your deliberations.—

Upon what, young gentleman, do you allow me to deliberate?—

Whether your lordship will receive Miss Rutland for your daughter, and by so doing make me the happiest of men; or whether, by withholding your approbation, you will oblige me to renounce my country, my name, my fortune, and my family?—

Enough, enough! (replied the earl)

—we dismiss the subject for the present,—

He soon after retired, and the evening became truly social, in mutual enquiries and congratulations. We perceived not the lapse of time, and at a late hour we separated for the night.—

Early the next morning, the earl desired my attendance in the library.— He there informed me, that, as it did not suit him to take an active part in my marriage (to which, out of regard to my happiness, he was induced to consent) he should avail himself of a situation in Ireland which was just offered him.

You may make my respects to Sir Felix (said he) and tell him, that he has acted with great generosity; and that, profiting by his example, I will endeavour to arrange my affairs so as

to afford you a more liberal allowance. We have both something to atone for; and must, therefore, forgive each other. With respect to settlements, I must decline all interference.—

I soon after left him; and, hastening to my mother, procured her entire approbation of my choice.—The next morning my sister gave her hand privately to my friend Severn; and I, in the evening, set out on my return to London.

My mother, Sir Felix, refers you, for the present, to the manuscript which Miss Rutland is in possession of, and pledges herself to give every possible demonstration of Miss Rutland's affinity to you.

On that subject, my dear Merioneth, (replied Sir Felix) I have never entertained a doubt.—



And to you, fair cousin, I bring compliments and congratulations innumerable, from Severn, his bride, and Lady Derwent, on your having attained the period of twenty-one, dismissing two guardians, and appointing a third, with every possible wish for your future happiness.—

I bowed to his compliments.—

In a few days (continued Merioneth) my father and mother begin their journey, and in about a week I expect Severn and my sister in London. And now, Sir Felix, may I hope that you will to-morrow give my lawyers the meeting; and that you, my dearest Ellen, every way superior to prudery and parade, will condescend to name an early day for the commencement of my happiness.—

Ellen, blushing scarlet deep, referred

the

the whole to Sir Felix, who named Thursday fortnight.

She was about to evade the sentence; but Sir Felix silenced her, by remarking, that happiness was too fleeting to be trifled with.

Do not (he added) play the part of a petulant child,—indifferent to a blessing, because within your reach,—

(I am corrected, my dear sir (said she) and will confess that I shall prepare without reluctance to obey your wishes.—

That is spoken like a girl of sense (cried Sir Felix).—I hate to see women putting every body else in motion, and standing still themselves.—

The time was agreed on; and, having myself procrastinated the period, fixed on for my union with Clifford, at his very earnest request, I

promised to bestow my hand on the  
the same day with my friend.

Sir Felix bespoke the honour of  
giving his both away. He is really  
grown young again. You may sup-  
pose, Jane, that I have but little leisure  
for writing; here is such a bustle,—so  
much finery,—so many parties for our  
amusement,—Merioneth so happy,—  
Ellen so tranquil,—my ladyship so well  
pleased,—and Clifford absolutely wild  
with transport. In short, what with  
mantua-makers, milliners, lawyers, and  
florists, we have not one leisure hour in  
the four-and-twenty.

A carriage stops at the door. Ellen  
out of breath. Mercy on us!—Lord  
and Lady Severn are arrived. I must  
hasten to receive them.

(22)

(In continuation).

**NOTHING** but congratulations!—I thought Julia would never quit the arms of her friend. They both wept even to agony. Sir Felix at length separated them. He received Lady Severn with affection truly parental—She is, he says, doubly dear to him, being the early friend of his Ellen, and the sister of Merioneth. They would fain have carried Ellen off to Severn-house; but, I loudly protested against any change till the general one takes place. You have no idea of the generosity of Sir Felix. A most elegant service of plate is this moment brought me. He calls it a trifling recompence for my kindness to his child.

at)

R 4

Adieu,



Adieu, my dear Jane. This is the  
last time I shall subscribe myself

Your affectionate

**LAURA MERIONETH.**

XXX

## LETTER XXX.

*Lady Severn to the Countess of Derwent.*

IN compliance with your wishes, my ever honoured madam, I am now, with heart-felt pleasure, to inform you, that our dear and charming Ellen is the happy wife of her adoring Merioneth. The ceremony was performed at my aunt's house, on Monday evening. My sweet sister was all tranquillity, and Laura was all herself. Pleasure illumined every feature of Albert's countenance, when he pressed to his heart, his long adored Ellen.

Clifford, with equal transport, received,

ceived, as the best gift heaven could bestow, the reluctant hand of his charming Laura. I really think it was not possible to have selected a more animated party. Sir Felix was actually wild with joy, and my aunt declared herself happier than at any former period of life.

After the ceremony we adjourned to the tea-table, and the evening concluded with that happy tranquillity which is alike removed from the vapours of melancholy, and the turbulence of mirth. My brother and sister have taken up their abode with Sir Felix. Mr. Clifford makes his home in St. James's square.

Yesterday we all met in Pall-mall; when, to our great surprise, Sir Felix apologised for leaving us, and we saw no more of him till late in the evening;

when,

When, presenting a parchment to Ellen, he said, that must plead his excuse for deserting us. We soon found it was the writings of a villa at Richmond, which sir Felix had that day completed the purchase of.

Do not suppose (said he, smiling) that I am going to give you a house free of incumbrance; for the terms of your admission must include an old man, who is too happy in your society to be easily compensated for the loss of it. What says my child?—will she undertake to cheer the remainder of my days?

Most willingly, sir (said our dear Ellen, smiling through her tears); and long, very long, may you be spared to your grateful Ellen, who, in promoting your happiness, and meriting the approbation



approbation of Lord Merioneth will find security for her own repose. The countenance of Albert glowed with transport, while he listened to the soft melody of her voice. But why need I be so minute—be it sufficient to say, that Clifford, Merioneth, and Severn, are the most endearing of men; while Laura, Ellen, and Julia, are the happiest of women.

My dear mother, why are you not here to witness our felicity? There is not a heart amongst us, but would glow with additional transport, could we hope for your society!

*(In continuation.)* There I hope to receive a

LADY Laura has just left me. She had with her a lady we have often heard

heard of, in Miss Lumly. She is now Mrs. Danville. Her husband is a native of France. His fortune is somewhat deranged; but his family and character unimpeachable. Mr. Lumly perceived their mutual affection, and wisely preferred his daughter's happiness to every other consideration; and last week, he attended them to the altar. Business brought them to London, and they are to continue here for some time.

We are to set out in a few weeks, in family, for Clifford's house in Kent, being part of a small estate which he inherits from his mother. It was repaired and fitted up previous to their marriage, (under the directions of Laura. There I hope to receive a packet from Ireland.

And here, my dear mother, let me  
I pause,

pause, in the fond hope, that in a little time my honoured father will have forgotten every painful recollection of past events, and be willing to return to the society of his affectionate children.

Every one of our friends unite in sentiments of love and esteem to my honoured parents. My brother and sister write by this conveyance. Ellen is here.—Their letters are ready.

Adieu, my dear, my revered mother!—Pray for a continuance of that bliss which a benevolent providence has kindly bestowed on your grateful and happy children; and believe me, with unfeigned affection,

Your dutiful daughter,

JULIA SEVERN.

L E T -

## LETTER XXXI.

*The Right Hon. the Countess of Derwent  
to Lady Severn.*

PROVIDENCE has heard my prayers, and has showered down its choicest blessings on the highly-favoured heads of my now happy and grateful children.

What, my dear Julia, have we to wish for, more than a continuance of those favours we already enjoy? Let us also endeavour to live so as to deserve them, in the constant and habitual practice of virtue and benevolence. Trust me, the surest, nay, the only foundation for happiness, is to be laid on the basis of rectitude and morality.

Resist,



Resist, my dearest girls (for I consider myself as addressing you both) the fascinating allurements of pleasures, which court but to destroy. I do not wish you to seclude yourselves from those amusements which are proper for your rank and station; on the contrary, I think a moderate use of them, under proper restrictions, both necessary and beneficial. To live in the world, we must live with the world; though we are not obliged to select our associates either from its idiots or maniacs.

I wish I could have been near you at this interesting period; but I am the more easily reconciled to our separation, by thinking that the knowledge which your aunt possesses will all be laid out to the advantage of her young friends. She is a most excellent woman,

woman, and will, I am sure, exert herself to point out the proper medium for your conduct. I am quite pleased to hear that you are going to pass some time in the country. You will there enjoy the calm delights of domestic tranquillity, without being subject to the unpleasant intrusion of unwelcome observers. You will there, too, have leisure to cement that friendly intercourse which at present exists among you, and which I hope and trust will end but with your lives; and when you return again to the busy scenes of the gay world, let neither the sneer of fashion nor the laugh of folly make you ashamed of being tender and affectionate wives. Young people, I have frequently observed, on their first setting out in life, deceive themselves: they expect to find in each other all

that perfection realized, which the glowing pencil of fancy had pictured them possessed of; and, of course, are disappointed. Misunderstandings ensue. Each party is eager to clear itself, at the expence of the other; candid explanations, which might clear up either inadvertencies or mistakes, are cautiously avoided, for fear they should be termed want of spirit, or ridiculed as groveling or mean submissions. Love, at length, flies off, indifference succeeds; and, perhaps, before either party had supposed their own folly would destroy their peace, it is gone, irrecoverably gone, for ever. But, above all, avoid, I entreat you, that dreadful vortex of folly and destruction, a gaming table; nor ever suffer yourselves to play, in any company whatever, for sums which would

either discompose your temper, disturb your tranquillity, or injure your fortune. It is much easier to avoid an ill, than to apply a remedy, after you have experienced one. And as I have gone so far in my letter on the subject of admonition and advice, suppose I go on, in the same strain, a little farther, and beg that you will, on no account, neglect a strict attention to domestic economy. Without regularity, the most splendid fortunes have been found insufficient; and with it, moderate ones have afforded all the comforts of life.

I am happy to inform you, that the earl is much improved both in health and spirits. He speaks of you all, frequently, with great affection, unaccompanied by that painful restraint which, for so long a time, almost secluded him from his nearest friends. Thank hea-



ven, the cause exists no longer; and I really believe, from some sentences he has lately uttered, that nothing but a little consciousness of having acted on former occasions, with rather too much rigidity, withholds him from returning immediately to England, to witness, and, of course, to share, the happiness of his children. A sudden change in the politics of this kingdom will oblige him to resign the station he now occupies. I fervently pray that it may create in him a lasting distaste to public employments. They are too frequently at variance with private tranquillity.

The earl writes by this post both to Mrs. Merioneth and Albert. Present my compliments of congratulation to all our friends. I inclose a few lines for Albert, and entreat to be affectionately

ately remembered to all and every one. I shall expect another packet very shortly; and hope I am not too sanguine in saying, that I think it will be answered in person by your affectionate mother,

HARRIET DERWENT.

The rest, write by dispatch both to Mrs. Mendenhall and Mr. Hester, my compliments of congratulation to all our friends. I enclose a few lines for Albert; and cannot too affectionately

## LETTER XXXII.

*Lady Severn to the Countess of Derwent.*

London, Argyle-street.

YOUR letter, my dear and honoured madam, was received with all the welcome such a letter deserves. Accept the sincere thanks of a grateful heart, which overflows with sentiments of admiration and respect, and permit me to assure you, with unfeigned sincerity, that on my heart your maternal admonitions are indelibly engraven. My dear mother will, I hope, find that her precepts, enforced by her example, will enable her happy children to fill with dignity and propriety those stations, which providence

dence has allotted. It is impossible to convey to your ladyship any idea of the pleasure your letters, and those of my honoured father, diffused through our whole circle of friends.

The fond hope of being again restored to your society, which was, indeed, all we had to ask of heaven, amply repays us for all those little perplexities and anxieties which we have recently suffered, and at which we have been too much prone to repine.

We are going to pass a few weeks at Richmond, with my brother and sister. Sir Felix is already there; he thinks himself better when in the country. We have spent our time delightfully in Kent. The manners of Lady Laura Clifford are every thing that is elegant, cheerful, and hospitable.



She exerts herself in every department of her household, and always with success. Not the minutest article of expence escapes her penetration; yet there is no meanness allied to her economy. Her table is perfectly genteel, though not profuse, her domestics are not numerous, but so well regulated, that one is frequently surprised at the order and exactness which appears in every thing about them; and one is, indeed, much better attended than in those mansions where there are frequently twice the number. The house is old-fashioned, but comfortable and convenient. Mr. Clifford has but very lately been put in possession of it. It belonged to his mother, and was her's prior to her marriage; but, at the death of her husband, she gave up her life in it in favour of his creditors. The

misery

happy-

harpy-talons of the law still continued to detain it; and Clifford had many doubts as to his ever being able to recover it; on which account he never mentioned to Laura any thing on the subject, till a very little time previous to their marriage. Justice, at length, prevailed, and the estate was restored to its right owner. It is charmingly situated, in the midst of extensive pleasure-grounds, rich meadow-lands, &c. and when improved by the judgment of Clifford, and the taste of his charming wife, it will really be a most delightful retreat.

Lady Laura had, by enquiries which appeared quite accidental, learned from Clifford, the name of the friend with whom he had placed the faithful domestic and humble friend of his late mother. She discovered that she was  
resident

resident with a gentleman of the name of Barnwell, a merchant of great repute, who had formerly been in habits of intimacy with his parents. She took an early opportunity of sending for her; and instantly proposed, that, if agreeable to herself, she should repair into Kent, and take upon her the immediate care of the housekeeping, a situation she was well qualified for, and one she had long occupied in the family of Mr. Clifford's parents.

She gratefully accepted a proposal at once so unexpected and agreeable; and, a few days after, set out for the place of her destination, accompanied by a whole caravan of furniture, prints, pictures, &c. &c. which had been removed from Malvern to the house of Mr. Barnwell, and were things which both Mary and Mr. Clifford looked upon

as

as hallowed relics; for they had been highly valued by their late mistress. Among them, is a full length of that lady, taken by the desire of her son. It is said to be an admirable likeness, and was painted by that great master of his art, Sir Joshua Reynolds.—A propos, I have a trifling anecdote for your ladyship, which I am sure will give you pleasure. Last evening, but one, we were all assembled to pass a few social hours at my aunt's, when a servant informed Mr. Clifford, that two gentlemen desired to speak with him, but refused sending up their names. He withdrew to learn their business, and soon after returned to us, apparently much agitated. Laura looked inquisitive; which he observing, took her unreluctant hand, and led her to the upper end of the drawing-room. They were a long  
time



time in close conversation. I could see, every now and then, a pearly trembler quiver in her eye; which, she, however, endeavoured to suppress. I began to be inquisitive, as did all our party; but none presumed to interrupt their conversation. At length they returned to the fire-side; when my aunt observing that they both looked very serious, hoped nothing had occurred to make them uneasy. Laura gave Clifford a look which seemed to say—I do not like secrets, let us tell. He interpreted it as I did; and instantly replied, that the two people who had enquired for him, were Mr. Barnwell and a brother of his late father, who had long been supposed no more; that he had many years since quitted England, crossed the Atlantic, and it was supposed had died in America.

nonson

However,

However, it proved to the contrary. He had made his way to a Dutch colony, where he had long practised a lucrative profession, and was returning home, richly laden with the produce of sober toil and patient industry. Unfortunately, within view of our own shores, a storm arose, and the vessel foundered. Mr. Clement Clifford, with the captain and a few others, trusted to the boat, and fortunately gained the land. Of their property, not an article escaped the raging deep; and what was worse than loss of property, every soul on board perished with it. "I do not grieve for myself (continued Mr. Clifford) for I cannot miss what I never expected to receive; but for my uncle, who has been for so many years patiently enduring all the evils of a torrid climate, all the mortification

fication of a seclusion from his friends and country, which though voluntary, were nevertheless severe; in order, at last, to repose in the autumn of his days, with ease and independence, in that loved and honoured land which gave him birth. I grieve for his disappointment, for he has passed that time of life, when new pleasures might be substituted, to allay, at least, the bitterness of retrospection and regret.—

Do not fear (cried Laura, with a vivacity all her own) we will not suffer him to feel the severity of his loss. Under our roof, he shall command all those indulgences, which may be necessary to the restoration of his health; and I hope, in a short time, he will acknowledge that he has found in our society, a sufficient recompense for the derelictions

derelictions of wealth. My dearest Laura (said Clifford) I have every hour fresh reason to admire the generosity of your character, and the humanity of your principles. I accept, because I am sure it will give you pleasure, the proposal you have made; and I think my uncle will not find it difficult to owe a favour to a heart like your's. Laura contended that there could be no favour conferred, where duty demanded our assistance; and entreated Mr. Clifford to go himself, early the next morning, into the city, and to bring his uncle with him to St. James's Square. This proposal was seconded by my aunt, who was very vexed to think he should, on any account, have been suffered to quit the house, without her seeing him, and giving him an invitation to return. At length it was agreed,



agreed, that a proposal of becoming their immediate inmate should be made him, and no excuses whatever admitted. Thus then ended the affair.

The next day, they were to dine with us, but owing to this occurrence, could not keep their engagement. We were, however, to meet in the evening, in order to form a party for Drury-Lane House. To our great surprise, Laura came alone. A look of uncommon hilarity played on her animated features, and announced to us that she had accomplished her wishes, and left Mr. Clement Clifford in some degree reconciled to the severity of his misfortune. She did not suffer us to be long ignorant of the source from which her satisfaction proceeded. Mr. Clement Clifford had, it seemed, accepted his nephew's invitation, and accom-

panied

panied him home. They thought his dejection was vastly diminished, and congratulated each other on the pleasing change in his appearance; for Clifford had described him as sinking under the double pressure of languor and misfortune. He was charmed with the easy mixture of elegance and hospitality, which he experienced at Mrs. Merioneth's; nor were they less pleased with the suavity of his manners, and the intelligence of his conversation.

In the harmony of spirits, with which Mr. Clifford then found himself inspired, it was impossible for him to retain the secret which then occupied his bosom, and which he had intended keeping, at least for some days longer. Not to tire you with prolixity, this secret was simply as follows:

Vol. II.

T

That

That his tale of distress was only fabricated, in order to prove if his nephew (of whom he had frequently received intelligence from Mr. Barnwell, though under the seal of secrecy) would receive him when arrayed in the garb of wretchedness and sorrow. The event justified the assertions of the worthy merchant, and more than answered the expectations of the fortunate wanderer, whose property, amounting in value to many thousand pounds, was all safely arrived, before he had taken his own passage to Europe; on board the vessel which unfortunately foundered, he had but little to regret the loss of. He concluded, by requesting his nephew to attend him that evening into the city, in order that he might more fully explain the real situation of his affairs. A party of old friends were

engaged

engaged to pass the evening with Mrs. Merioneth, and this accounted for Laura's coming to us alone. We congratulated her on the opening prospect of Mr. Clifford. She replied, it gave her pleasure only as it promoted the happiness of others. It will give (said she) to a noble heart, that first of human blessings, independence (for Mr. Clement Clifford had insisted on his nephew's acceptance of ten thousand pounds) and enlarge, I hope, our sphere of active benevolence.

None who had witnessed the disinterested conduct of Laura, could doubt the sincerity of her present assertions; and I am sure, my dear madam, you admire her too much, to doubt them for a moment.

To-morrow, we leave London, and join Sir Felix, at Richmond, who is



quite impatient for our arrival. My  
 sister writes by this paquet, so does  
 Merioneth; of course, I say nothing  
 more than they are all well and happy;  
 and most impatiently expecting the  
 promised period of your arrival. We  
 all hope nothing will retard that mo-  
 ment of supreme felicity, when the  
 best of mothers will clasp to her mater-  
 nal bosom, her dutiful and affectionate,

JULIA SEVERN.

THE END.



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